

## MBPD Promotes One Officer; Hires Another

By Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay Police Department filled a vacant sergeant position, hired one new officer and still has one spot open, for which they are now seeking to fill and get back to full strength.

Senior Ofc. Robert Hufstetler was promoted to Sgt. Hufstetler in a badge-pinning ceremony in early January, filling a vacant position that opened up when former MBPD Sgt. Jerrod Place left for a job with the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department. Place was promoted to sergeant in March 2020.

Hired by retired Chief Joe Loven, Sgt. Hufstetler came to Morro Bay in 1998 from Moreno Valley, where he'd started in law enforcement in 1994.

In Moreno Valley, he worked with that department's Gang Unit and Graffiti Patrol teams, according to MBPD Cmdr. Amy Watkins.

Hufstetler is now the longest-tenured officer at MBPD, after Sgt. Rick Catlett retired in March 2020.

"Rob was an original member of the P.D.'s Motor Unit when it started back in 2001," Cmdr. Watkins said, "until it was defunded in 2005; and was instrumental in helping me revive our Motors Program back in 2016."

Sgt. Hufstetler is still a motorcycle cop, though these days they glide along on electric motorcycles. He is also a trainer and the traffic division supervisor.

Sgt. Hufstetler has worn many hats in the small department. Cmdr. Watkins said he's been the department's Range Master, a Senior Officer, Field Training Officer and has served as a Watch Commander and Acting Sergeant throughout his career.

"There is no doubt that he is well qualified and capable of handling the role as a patrol sergeant," she said.

Place had replaced Sgt. Catlett, which left an officer position open. They'd recruited for that job and were ready to fill it in April 2020, but then the pandemic hit.



Morro Bay Police Department has promoted its longest tenured officer, Robert Hufstetler, to fill a vacant sergeant's position. Hufstetler has been with MBPD since 1998. Submitted photo

The City's budget belt tightened considerably with the coronavirus pandemic response and the Governor's stay-at-home orders, and subsequent business closures that took a white shark-sized bite out of the City's tax revenues.

Leaving that position open was one of numerous cost cutting measures the City took, including some 70 layoffs

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## Moving Forward in 2021 Tim Cowen, Morro Bay Entrepreneur to Lead Chamber Board

By Judy Salamacha



Tim Cowen, the new Morro Bay Chamber board president, in front of his restaurant Pizza Port. Photo by Judy Salamacha

Anyone who knows Tim Cowen knows he loves to find a good business investment. Although it seems a natural transition that Cowen would take over leadership of the 2021 Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors from outgoing chair (but incoming treasurer), Steve Peck, it took an "aha moment" for him to become an active member.

He credits Cyndee Edwards, owner of The Skin Shop and longtime Morro Bay Chamber Board Chair for helping him understand that membership was the right vehicle to build a stronger business climate.

"I believe small business needs a voice — a strong voice," Cowen said. "Together we need to build on our common ideas for Morro Bay's future to make them happen. Voices are louder when numbers are larger — when a diverse, but vocal, group of like-minded community members focus intentionally on building a friendly place for all business to thrive."

Cowen intends to continue efforts currently under-

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## Feeding Students in Need

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

School closures and those that have morphed into limited in-person classroom time due to the coronavirus pandemic have had an impact on more than student learning and socializing. School is also where many children receive healthy meals — in some cases their only meal of the day.

In response, the San Luis Coastal Unified School District Food Services Department stepped up to the challenge, and, after a bit of trial and error, is providing more than 30,000 meals per week to 2200 children 18 and under.

"With schools closing back in March, we pretty much tried every way you can think of serving kids when they're not actually at school," said Erin Primer, food services director for SLCUSD. "We did a daily meal that parents had to come and pick up but very quickly learned that that wasn't the safest option in the midst of a pandemic, so we moved to a weekly meal kit. We're trying to give as many days of meals at one time as is allowable by the federal and state government."

The meal program stepped away from food packaged into individual kits and is designed to deliver a mini pantry of sorts that can be combined in creative ways to satisfy a variety of tastes.

"We want kids to really have good tasting food that is good for you," Primer said. "It [the meal program] has really opened



Cal Poly dietary interns working with San Luis Coastal Unified School District tour Rock Front Ranch in Santa Maria where they checked out jujubes. Photos by Ky Skelton

up the possibilities for families to know that there are so many different diets and different ways of eating. It's so fun for kids to know that there's a whole world beyond a red delicious apple and cheddar cheese."

About 1 in 4 children in San Luis Obispo County are food insecure, an increase from 1 in 6 before the pandemic, Primer said.

Children are not the only ones SLCUSD wants to keep healthy — supporting area farmers is a significant goal of the meal

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## Volunteer Extraordinaire Chuck Stoll, 2020 Citizen of the Year

By Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce has named its 2020 community award winners, adding a new award for non-profits. But due to the coronavirus pandemic response, they can't be feted in the usual way.

The Chamber named Community volunteer Chuck Stoll its 2020 Citizen of the Year; Jack Smith the 2020 Living Treasure; FitnessWorks/TherapyWorks as Business of the Year; and Morro Bay in Bloom as the first winner of a new "Non-Profit of the Year" Award.

The awardees would normally be honored at the Chamber's Installation Dinner, dubbed, "Morro Bay's Big Night Out," a themed, gala, sit-down dinner with live music, local cuisine, auctions, the swearing in of the Chamber's new Board, and attended by local and political dignitaries.

But with such gatherings prohibited, the event will be virtual.

"Like most events in the last year," the Chamber said in a news release, "the Chamber has had to reimagine how to recognize those in the community who are making a difference and has transitioned the traditionally in-person event."

The Internet gathering will be at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12. The ceremony will be broadcast live on Charter Cable Channel

20, produced through AGP Video.

"The 2020 awardees," Erica Crawford, Chamber President and CEO said, "have selflessly contributed to our community through their generosity, stewardship and resiliency during the pandemic. It is important that we show up and let these people and businesses know that even though we can't be together in person, that they are just as important as recipients from years past."



The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce honored Chuck Stoll as its 2020 Citizen of the Year.

**Chuck Stoll** is being honored "for his generosity of time and resources to benefit all people of Morro Bay."

Stoll is involved in multiple organizations and causes "that provide important

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## Nesting Osprey Welcome

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



An osprey catches a freshwater trout. Photo submitted

Despite the rain last Saturday, the Morro Coast Audubon Society completed a project hoping to entice ospreys to nest in Los Osos.

Two nesting platforms designed to appeal to the raptor birds were installed at Sweet Springs Nature Preserve located off of Ramona Ave and 4th St.

Over the past decade, increased numbers of osprey have appeared around the Morro Bay Estuary and have taken up year-round residence.

“Osprey really started showing up more, not just in the wintertime, but staying all summer, which is during nesting season,” said Judy Neuhauser, president of the Morro Coast Audubon Society. “Ospreys seem to be spreading out along the coast. We know they’re nesting in Southern California; we know they’re nesting up in the Bay Area. There aren’t any nesting between L.A. and San Francisco that we know of. It would be really wonderful to be able to establish a breeding population here.”

Ospreys like to nest higher up in anything from the tops of dead trees to atop power poles, and sometimes on buoys, chimneys, or other structures, preferably in sight a body of water that can provide the fish they eat.

“There’s been one [osprey] that has actually been bringing sticks into the mast of the Windwalker in Morro Bay, and looks like it’s trying to establish a nest,” Neuhauser said referencing a derelict boat tied up to the North T-Pier. “It’s not an appropriate nest site. It is too small and the sticks keep falling off.”

The raptors have been seen fishing in the Baywood Inlet, in other channels of the Estuary and along the Coast from Avila Beach to north of Cayucos. They have also taken to perching in trees at Sweet Springs over the past few years, which made experts believe that the site was potentially excellent for a nest platform. One was placed on a dead eucalyptus on the side of the pond side of the preserve and the other in a tree near the new bird overlook area.

On Giving Tuesday in 2020, Morro Coast Audubon sent out a fundraising call for help with purchasing materials

and to help offset the costs of an arborist who had to climb and trim two trees at the preserve and install the platforms. Donors contributed more than \$5,000, which should cover the costs of the current structures plus some of the funds needed to for a Coastal Development Permit for another nesting area in Morro Bay.

“We need to do the coastal development permit,” said Neuhauser. “We’ve been talking to city planning about a location and we think we have one that might work

The platforms are made of a fiberglass composite making them relatively light weight and rust proof. Sticks and twigs were fastened to them before installation to create a “proto-nest” that is known to encourage osprey to examine and consequently utilize.

There is no guarantee that osprey will immediately occupy the nest platforms.

“It is a bit of a gamble,” said Dave Clendenen, Sweet Springs Nature Preserve manager and raptor expert. “It may be several years before osprey accept the offering. It may also be that one of the other raptors in the area will take over the nest platforms. We will provide an opportunity and await the results. We are confident that some raptor will eventually make use of these platforms to raise their young. At the volunteer work party a week ago, there were two osprey soaring overhead for quite a while, calling to each other. It really looked like courtship to me, so we are hopeful.”

All raptors are protected by state and federal regulations. It is illegal to capture or kill a raptor; possess a raptor (living or dead), or any pieces or parts of raptors, including feathers, without the proper permits from state governments and the federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“They are a species of concern,” said Neuhauser. “They’re at the top of the food chain. If there’s anything going wrong with the food chain, they’re pretty heavily affected.”

For more information about the Morro Coast Audubon Society, go to <https://www.morrocoastaudubon.org>.



Dave Clendenen, preserve manager for the Morro Coast Audubon Society, displays the new osprey nesting platform that was installed at Sweet Springs Nature Preserve. Photo by Judy Neuhauser



Roberto Parra and Sandro Rodriguez of Greenvale Tree Company hoist the nest into a tree near the new bird overlook area at Sweet Springs Nature Preserve. Photo by Judy Neuhauser

## Libraries Launch Live Help for Job Seekers and More

County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries has launched Brainfuse JobNow/VetNow. This versatile online service supports job seekers, veterans, and their families with all stages of job searching, employment transition assistance, navigating the VA bureaucracy, preparing for standardized tests, and building marketable academic skills, said library representatives.

JobNow/VetNow databases are now accessible for free with a SLO County Library card, 24/7, and online live help is available every day from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. To access these resources, go to [slo-library.org](http://slo-library.org), click on the “Reference” tab, then “Reference Databases.”

JobNow/VetNow includes the following features:

**Live Online Navigators:** VetNow Navigators are trained to help veterans and families connect with valuable benefits and resources. They will answer questions related to benefits eligibility, refer patrons to applicable community resources for housing, healthcare, and education benefits and assist patrons with locating accredited claims agents

**Job Tools:** Designed to help with all stages of the job-hunting process, VetNow’s Job Tools feature career coaching, expert resume assistance, live interview preparation, and more.

Highlights include using the career resources to discover one’s best career fit based on education, experience, and personalitySearch for a job with nationwide and local resources, download templates for the most common re-



sume types, receive resume and cover letter assistance from trained experts, brush up on job interview techniques or get live online interview practice from trained job coaches

**Learning Tools:** Users build academic skills and prepare for college with VetNow’s array of tools, including:

- LearnNow - Live skills tutoring and an extensive library of lessons, video tutorials, and practice tests including SAT, ACT, TEAS, HESI, GRE, GMAT. and more
- Leap - build academic skills through targeted lessons, quizzes
- Flashbulb - create and share flashcards, tests, and educational games
- Meet - schedule online sessions using the Brainfuse Meet whiteboard
- Brainwave - a versatile whiteboard where students can draw their ideas for later review or email them to others.

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# Regional Stay at Home Order Lifted

Officials with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), on Monday, ended the regional stay at home order for all regions statewide, including the Southern California area of which San Luis Obispo County is a part. The San Joaquin Valley and Bay Area were also removed from the list.

Four-week ICU capacity projections for these regions are above 15%, the threshold that allows for exiting the order. The Sacramento region exited on January 12 and the Northern California region never entered the order.

This action allows all counties statewide to return to the rules and framework of the Blueprint for a Safer Economy and color-coded tiers that indicate which activities and businesses are open based on local case rates and test positivity. The majority of the counties are in the strictest, or purple tier. Tier updates are provided weekly on Tuesdays. Individual counties could choose to impose stricter rules.

“Californians heard the urgent message to stay home as much as possible and accepted that challenge to slow the surge and save lives,” said Dr. Tomás Aragón, CDPH director and state public health officer, in a news release. “Together, we changed our activities knowing our short-term sacrifices would lead to longer-term gains. COVID-19 is still here and still deadly, so our work is not over, but it’s important to recognize our collective actions saved lives and we are turning a critical corner.”

While there are positive signs that the virus is spreading at a slower rate across the state, the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, officials caution. It is still critical that Californians continue to wear masks when they leave their homes, maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet, wash their hands frequently, avoid gatherings and mixing with other households, follow all state and local health department guidance and get the vaccine when it’s their turn.

“California is slowly starting to emerge from the most dangerous surge of this pandemic yet, which is the light at the end of the tunnel we’ve been hoping for,” said California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly. “Seven weeks ago, our hospitals and front-line medical workers were stretched to their limits, but Californians heard the urgent message to stay home when possible and our surge after the December holidays did not overwhelm the health care system to the degree we had feared.”

Nearly all the counties exiting the regional stay at home order are in the Purple or widespread (most restrictive) tier, including SLO. Services and activities, such as outdoor dining and personal services, may resume immediately with required modifications, subject to any additional restrictions

required by local jurisdictions. For a detailed list of what types of businesses are and aren’t open, go to <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>

Because case rates remain high across most of the state, the state’s hospital surge order remains in place to prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. The limited stay at home order, which limits non-essential activities between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., expires with the regional stay at home order ending.

# City Council Endorses Impeachment

By Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay City Council officially lent its endorsement to the second impeachment of President Donald Trump, drafting a letter accusing the President of “inciting violence” in connection with the Jan. 6 siege on the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

As proposed, the unanimously passed letter dated Jan. 14, read:

“The Morro Bay City Council joins calls for President Donald Trump’s immediate removal from office, by impeachment, for inciting violence against the government of the United States and the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.

“Donald Trump’s bid to overturn the results of the free and fair election that he lost cannot be met with silence. Our democracy belongs to the people and we all — Republicans, Democrats, Independents and members of other political parties — must strive to protect it. Thus, it is imperative that we hold those who violently attacked our Capitol, and who promoted such attacks, responsible.

“We join other local, state, and federal leaders to support this effort for the sake of our democracy, the very democracy that provides us the privilege to serve.”

The letter was the sole agenda item at a Jan. 14 special council meeting. It was signed by all five council members after they discussed such a move at their regular, Jan. 12 meeting.

It was apparently drafted by Councilwoman Dawn Addis, who “suggested content for the letter,” according to City Manager Scott Collins.

In a post from her Internet newsletter, Addis said, “This week, Council unanimously voted to send a letter to Congress supporting impeachment and barring the President from serving in office again.

“In doing so, we became the first local government in SLO County to speak up.”

She said it wasn’t an easy decision. “This wasn’t an easy decision; in fact, it weighed heavily on me,” she said. “However, I am grateful to work with colleagues who believe in

our democracy and understand the seriousness of what happened at the Capitol. I urge other local leaders to raise their voices as well.”

Collins told Estero Bay News that the letter was changed to focus on the U.S. Senate, calling on that body to remove the President, as under the U.S. Constitution, the House of Representatives handles impeachment — which means to bring charges — with the Senate having the responsibility to conduct a trial presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and vote whether to remove the President from office.

In correspondences submitted before the special meeting on the impeachment letter, Morro Bay resident, Susan Stewart said, “For what it’s worth, I absolutely support the City of Morro Bay, tiny though we are, in issuing a letter of support for the impeachment of the Commander in Chief, whose actions in inciting violent protest and denying free and fair elections cannot be tolerated in a democratic and constitutional republic.”

On the other hand, Morro Bay resident, Lynn Meissen, wrote, “I vociferously disapprove of the Council sending a letter in support of the impeachment.”

The letter addresses the most unusual impeachment in U.S. history, as the House members did not hold any evidentiary hearings before House Committees, where allegations would be presented, sworn testimony heard and evidence submitted and weighed.

Impeachment charges would normally be recommended by Committee, then brought before the full House for a vote, a process that took several weeks in December 2019.

That was the first time President Trump was impeached. He was acquitted by the Senate in late-January 2020.

Instead, this time around House members voted to impeach in a single day.

Of note, the Morro Bay City Council did not submit a similar letter endorsing the President’s first impeachment. However, instead of a rather convoluted accusation of wrong doing over a phone call to the President of Ukraine, the events of the Capitol Building siege was widely documented and shocked the nation.


It had lawmakers claiming the President incited the riot and was “a clear and present danger” to the country.

Nevertheless, Trump Impeachment 2.0 didn’t make it through the Senate before Jan. 20, when new President Joe Biden was sworn in and former-President Trump left the White House for his Florida home.

At deadline, a Senate trial had yet to be scheduled.

Constitutional scholars, such as Harvard Prof. Alan Dershowitz, have argued that someone who is no longer in office cannot be impeached because impeachment means “to remove from office.”


Impeachment Continued on page 4



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Impeachment From page 3

Democrats pushed for the second impeachment, according to news reports, because it would also prevent Trump from potentially running for President again in 2024, as disqualification from holding any federal office in the future is the other consequence of impeachment.

If he were to run, he would join President Teddy Roosevelt as Presidents who ran again after being out of office for a term. Bull Moose Party candidate, Roosevelt, lost his comeback bid in 1912, in a 3-way race with incumbent, Republican President William Howard Taft, and Democrat Woodrow Wilson.

Wilson won the Presidency when Roosevelt and Taft split the Republican vote.

## County Continues COVID-19 Vaccinations

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County has moved into an active fight against the coronavirus pandemic, beginning to vaccinate local residents against the deadly COVID-19 disease.

SLO County rolled out its COVID-19 vaccine program in early January starting with health care workers who provide direct, in-person clinical care, and the residents and staff of long-term care facilities. That’s where the majority of SLO County’s 151 deaths so far have come from.

Beginning Jan. 18, the County Health Department widened its target patients to anyone 75-older.

“Residents over 75,” the County said in a news release, “are first in line in the Phase 1b group because people age 75 and older are at higher risk for serious COVID-19 illness or death than other age groups. Allocating the County’s limited vaccine supply to this group will help prevent the most serious outcomes.”

The County said it expects to have enough vaccine to open up vaccinations to others that fall within the 1b categories “in February or March, maybe sooner.”

That Phase 1c would include “vulnerable community members and critical infrastructure workers. With dates and line-ups to be decided,” according to the County.

The 1c people include anyone 50-64 and people 16-49 who have an underlying health condition or disability, “which increases their risk of severe COVID-19.”

These would include: water and wastewater; defense; energy; chemical and hazardous materials; communications and IT; financial services; government operations/community-based essential functions. Of course these are subject to change.

The County currently has two vaccination sites: San Luis Obispo Vaccine Clinic, 2156 Sierra Way, SLO; and the Paso Event Center (Mid State Fairgrounds), 2198 Riverside Ave.

A third vaccination site was slated to open at Arroyo Grande High School on Monday, Jan. 25, according to the County.

The goals for the vaccinations locally seem modest, as the County said it planned to administer some 900 shots a week (Monday-Friday) across the three sites, based on how much vaccine the Health Department has been able to get. They would do more if they had the medicine.

“With this additional vaccine clinic, the County is prepared to administer upwards of 3,000 doses daily [15,000 a week] when supply allows,” the County said. “Over 4,000 vaccine appointments were booked for this week within hours of opening the appointments up to the public, following the County’s expansion into the first part of Phase 1b, allowing residents over 75 to receive their first dose.”

If readers make an appointment to get the vaccine but can’t find a ride, the County is offering door-to-door rides through transportation agencies. “Anyone with an appointment can call RTA Runabout at (805) 541-2544 or call Ride-On at (805) 541-8747 to schedule a no-cost round trip to a vaccine clinic.”

Go online to: [www.RecoverSLO.org/vaccines](http://www.RecoverSLO.org/vaccines) or call

## News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

### Local Marketing Firm Wins Gold

Rock Harbor Marketing in Morro Bay took home gold in the 15th annual international AVA Digital Awards.

AVA Digital recognizes outstanding achievement by creative professionals involved in the concept, direction, design, and production of media that is part of the evolution of digital communication. Work ranges from audio and video productions to websites and social media sites that present interactive components such as video, animation, blogs, and podcasts to other forms of user-generated digital communication. Judges are industry professionals who look for companies and individuals whose talent exceeds a high standard of excellence and whose work serves as a benchmark for the industry.

Rock Harbor Marketing was innovative in the social impact space by creating a call to action campaign benefiting California flower farmers on the verge of ruin due to COVID-19. The California Cut Flower Commission recognized the importance of social media and digital to connect with their audience to ignite change effectively and worked with RHM to create the now multiple-award winning Saving the California Flower Farmers campaign.

“RHM was instrumental in helping our members get national attention during the COVID-19 pandemic to help us stay in business,” said David Pruitt, CEO California Cut Flower Commission.

Rock Harbor Marketing was also honored with gold for Best Call to Action for the same campaign in the 5th annual Shorty Social Good Awards, an award recognizing excellence in social media marketing.

### French Hospital Introduces Lifesaving Diagnostic Technology

French Hospital Medical Center has a new lifesaving technology in the clinical laboratory department. CellaVision offers a proven technology called Digital Cell Morphology that replaces or complements manual microscopy to create an automated digital workflow to detect life-threatening blood cancers.

This automation removes the laborious and tedious aspects of performing blood cell analysis, making better use of staff and skills while empowering the hospital laboratory to deliver faster and more standardized test results.

“Time is of the essence when diagnosing blood cancers,” says French Hospital Chief Medical Officer and Hematology Specialist, Jim Malone, MD. “With this critical technology, we can offer greater efficiency, quality, and staff proficiency.”

The purchase of this medical technology was made possible by a donation from Steve and Barbara Hearst. Steve Hearst is a longtime supporter of the Hearst Cancer Resource Center at French Hospital and continues to be a strong advocate for enhancing cancer services for

our community. The Hearst family and foundation were instrumental in supporting the opening of the Center and creating a permanent endowment.

As our community continues to combat a pandemic, it is an important reminder that people are still struggling with other life threatening medical conditions such as cancer. Throughout these unprecedented times, the Hearst Cancer Resource Center continues to offer critical programs and services to cancer patients either virtually or by phone.

### SLO Breaks Ground on Railroad Safety Trail

For people who work or play in the City of San Luis Obispo and want to get around while helping the environment will soon have a larger, safer area to embrace pedal and foot power.

The City of San Luis Obispo held a virtual groundbreaking event for the Taft to Pepper Streets portion of the Railroad Safety Trail (RRST). The RRST has long been one of the highest-priority multimodal transportation projects in the City and is expected to be completed in July 2021. The project provides safer access for bicyclists and pedestrians while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The project is partially funded by the Local Revenue Measure.

Over the past two decades, approximately 40 percent of the total four-mile trail was completed and over 1,000 pedestrians and cyclists per day enjoy existing portions of the trail. This project will focus on expanding the trail from Taft Street to Pepper Streets, which connects Cal Poly to the Downtown area. This segment was included in the 2013 Bicycle Transportation Plan and supports the City’s goal for improving sustainable transportation.

“Completing the Railroad Safety Trail has been a top priority for many of our bicycle and pedestrian community members,” said Public Works Director Matt Horn. “Through partnerships with Cal Poly, Caltrans, and Union Pacific Railroad, the City is pleased to provide another safe and accessible alternative transportation opportunity for the community.”

In 2015, the City applied for a Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant for the Project and was awarded \$3.24 million in funding towards project construction. Over the past five years, the project progressed with planning, design, environmental review, permitting and right-of-way acquisition to the current “shovel-ready” stage.

The RRST extension from Taft Street to Pepper Street, is estimated to cost \$5.2 million, and will encompass approximately 0.4 miles from the existing trail alignment on the west side of California Boulevard, near Taft Street, south along the existing bridge crossing over Highway 101, then shifting away from California Boulevard behind the California Highway Patrol property to a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge crossing over the Union Pacific Railroad and connecting Phillips Lane to Pepper Street. A local contractor, Souza Construction, was selected for the project and will begin work this month.

the County at (805) 543-2444, 7-days a week, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to find out if you are eligible now, or will have to wait.

But it’s not all good news with regards to the life-saving vaccine. The Health Department said it was halting use of the Moderna COVID vaccine after some people had an allergic reaction and the State Health Department alerted the vaccination agencies. So far the cautions have only been for one batch of vaccine, which unfortunately was shipped here, too.

“The County Public Health Department confirmed today that it received 4,400 doses of the single lot in question,” the department said, “but none of these doses have been administered yet in SLO County. These doses will be reserved until the State provides further guidance and validates their safety. The State will not immediately replace the doses at this time, which could cause a temporary setback in distribution of second doses to people in SLO County.”

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CSD Board Sworn In

By Neil Farrell



Troy Gatchell is the newest member of the Los Osos Community Services District Board of Directors.

The Los Osos Community Services District Board of Directors welcomed a new member and swore in two returning members at a remote meeting Dec. 11.

Troy Gatchell was seated as the newest member of the Board. Gatchell said in a statement, “As an 8-year resident of Los Osos, I’m committed to the sustainability of our water basin and continued excellence in our community services.”

He’s been a long-time volunteer in a local environmental group. “My time volunteering in Surfrider’s ‘Know Your H20’ organization,” Gatchell said, “gave me a unique perspective of the water issues that face our state and community.”

His work experiences will be valuable. “I’ll bring years of experience in computer engineering and business operations,” Gatchell said, “providing innovative solutions to our community issues. Having served in the U.S. Army drives my sense of community and teamwork. Together, we can build a community that we are proud of and one that will thrive into the future.”

Gatchell won a 4-year term of office in a November walkover, as the CSD had just three people vying for the three open seats, and therefore the County Clerk canceled the election and declared them the winners.

Long-time Incumbent Director, Marshall Ockylski, got a 4-year term along with Gatchell, and appointed Incumbent, Christine Womack, got a 2-year term.

Womack was dragged into an election SNAFU in 2018, when the County Clerk messed up and listed her on the ballots as running for a 2-year term, when it should have been a 4-year term.

The mistake, which County Clerk Tommy Gong took full responsibility for, had her in a separate contest, when normally, all candidates run together with the top vote getters winning available seats.

Gong’s remedy at the time was to ask County Supervisors to nullify that election. The CSD Board then appointed her to a 2-year term and she would have to run again in 2020 to put the Board’s terms of office back on the proper schedule. With no opposition, she was declared the winner without having to campaign.

But she will have to run again in 2022, should she decide to try for a full, 4-year term, putting the Board’s election schedule back on track.

The other two board members, who were not up for re-election, are Board President Chuck Cesena and Matthew Fourcroy.

The next board meeting is set for Thursday Feb. 4 and will continue to be held virtually under the State’s and County’s Coronavirus Pandemic restrictions.



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Man Swept Off Jetty



A wave-watcher in Morro Bay was swept off the North Jetty by a humongous breaker and nearly drowned inside the harbor mouth, in a frightening reminder of the dangers of the ocean.

The incident occurred Jan. 11, during several days when giant waves pounded the jetty, a spectacular event when it happens and one that attracts a lot of people to marvel at the sight.

It happened about 9:30 a.m. when an unidentified man was walking on the jetty and got hit by a wave. The water knocked him off his feet and he is believed to have hit his head as he was swept into the water on the other side.

Fire Chief Steve Knuckles said the man was found by bystanders unconscious and facedown in the water. When firefighters and the harbor patrol arrived, the man had regained consciousness and he was transported to the hospital.

Chief Knuckles said if he’d stayed in the water for much longer, he might not have made it. He was not able to give any information on the injured man’s identity under privacy laws.

The waves at the jetty have seen numerous big days recently and often come up ahead of storms.

Readers are reminded to never turn your back on the ocean and to be especially careful around the jetty, for while it may be fun to clamber along the massive boulders, they are sometimes unstable and a person can suffer serious injuries in a fall.

And so-called “sneaker waves” that are much bigger than normal can come in on even the calmest of days.

Small Business Grant Program

If you missed the deadline for the first round of Small Business COVID-19 Relief Fund Grants, another opportunity starts February 2.

Last year Governor Newsom announced a package of assistance for small businesses impacted by COVID-19, including \$500 million in grants. The program was created by the Governor’s Office of the Small Business Advocate

**Who is Eligible?**

A small business or small nonprofit must satisfy the following criteria to be eligible to receive a grant award

- Must meet the definition of an “eligible small business.”
- Must be an active businesses or nonprofit operating since at least June 1, 2019
- Businesses must currently be operating or have a clear plan to re-open once the State of California permits re-opening of the business
- Business must be impacted by COVID-19 and the health and safety restrictions such as business interruptions or business closures incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Business must be able to provide organizing documents including 2018 or 2019 tax returns or Form 990s, copy of official filing with the California Secretary of State, if applicable, or local municipality for the business such as one of the following: Articles of Incorporation, Certificate of Organization, Fictitious Name of Registration or Government-Issued Business License

- Business must be able to provide acceptable form of government-issued photo ID
- Applicants with multiple business entities, franchises, locations, etc. are not eligible for multiple grants and are only allowed to apply once using their eligible small business with the highest revenue

The amount of grant funding ranges from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Businesses are eligible based on their annual revenue as documented in their most recent tax return.

**Necessary documents:**

1. Application Certification: Signed certification used to certify your business
2. Business Financial Information:
  - a. Most recent tax return filed (2019 or 2018) – provided in an electronic form for online upload, such as PDF/JPEG or other approved upload format.
  - b. Copy of official filing with the California Secretary of State, if applicable, or local municipality for the business such as one of the following: Articles of Incorporation, Certificate of Organization, Fictitious Name of Registration or Government-Issued Business License.
3. Government Issued Photo ID: Such as a Driver’s License or Passport

Round 2 opens February 2 and closes February 8. For more information, go to CAReliefGrant.com.

County Hires New Deputy Health Director

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County Health Department has filled a key management position from within, and saved a little money over the last person to fill the role.

County Supervisors approve hiring SLO native Nicholas Drews to fill its Deputy Health Director position that has been vacant since March 2020.

According to a staff report, Drews has been with the Health Agency for 5 years, working mainly on the electronic health records systems. He has also taken a leadership role in the County’s response to the Coronavirus

Pandemic serving most recently as the Logistics Section chief.

Drews reportedly grew up in San Luis Obispo and earned an MBA focusing on finance and accounting from University of Southern California. Before he went to work with the County he was “a consultant leading projects to re-form several large companies to respond to changing financial conditions and to build new organizational cultures,” the report said.

He won’t be paid as much as his predecessor, who

Health Director Continued on page 6

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Health Director From page 5

left the job at the highest pay level. Drews will come in at the second tier of the pay scale, which means he will make \$127,858 in salary and \$66,314 in benefits for a total compensation package of \$194,172 per year, according to the report.

His predecessor at step 5 of the pay scale was making \$148,000 salary and \$74,242 in benefits (\$222,255 per year total).

The current County budget, which is already half way over, includes a full year's salary for the position, so the money not paid while it was vacant could be considered savings.

Drews' hiring comes as the Health Agency enters into a new, 3-year \$41 million contract for drug treatment services that will fund the County's programs through June 2023.

Coming from State and Federal sources, the \$41M in grants breaks down to \$13.97M a year for this and the next two fiscal years. Of that annual total, \$2.45M comes from the State and \$11.52M from the Federal Government.

Called the "Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System" or DMC-ODS, the program is designed to provide drug treatment services to patients that qualify for Medi-Cal and comes through the California Department of Health Care Services.

As one might imagine, there was a lot of paperwork to sort through to satisfy both State and Federal program requirements. According to the County, it first submitted an application to enter the program in July 2016. The Federal government waived regulations that required there to be existing drug treatment programs, but the County was subjected to increased requirements for quality assurance, monitoring and accountability.

The new funding also changed how the services are billed from where the State set the reimbursements based on service rendered, to the County setting reimbursement rates "to reflect the actual cost of providing covered treatment services."

The County also had to establish "accountability measures including selective contracting process with providers, County monitoring of approved providers, State External Quality Review Organization annual audits, and implementation of evidence-based practices in substance use disorder treatment."

In August 2016 the County began implementing its plan that included budgeting for 26.5 full time equivalent positions and adjusting the fiscal year budget.

But it wasn't until March 2017 that the State Department of Health Care Services approved the County's plan, and then it had to go to the Federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid for another approval.

After some more check-ins with the State, the County got the go-ahead to start its program on Jan. 1, 2018.

Among the issues that have made it challenging to meeting program goals, which are focused in Paso Robles, has been office space, or the lack thereof at the Paso Robles clinic site, but according to the report, the County has procured additional space in the Paso Robles area for future program growth.

Vaccinations From page 4

County Health Director, Dr. Penny Borenstein said, "Our priority from day one has been to administer vaccines effectively and safely. While some mild side effects from the Moderna vaccine are normal, we want to be especially careful to make sure all vaccines are safe for our community. We will await further guidance from the CDC and the State before administering these doses."

The State said a "higher-than-usual" number of adverse reactions were reported at a lone California clinic.

Apparently that was enough to shut down use of the entire batch of vaccine, affecting thousands of citizens.

The County said it would continue honoring all appointments for the first of two doses of the vaccine, but the bad batch of serum could delay people from getting the second, booster shot, at least until the company replaces the vaccine.

"While a second dose of vaccine is highly recommended to ensure maximum immunity against COVID-19," the County said, "public health officials say receiving the second dose a few weeks later than expected will not be detrimental to health and will not require the recipient to start the vaccine series over. Residents awaiting their second dose of vaccine will be informed by text or email when new appointments are available."

Meanwhile, SLO County along with Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, continue to be lumped in with the Southern California "Region" in terms of the Governor's "Blueprint for a Safer Economy," due to there being little to no available intensive care unit beds available in much of that region.

This even though SLO County's available ICU beds was 50% as of Jan. 22.

So restaurants are still offering takeout only, retail stores (except large box stores like Walmart) are limited in the number of people that can come inside at one time, and salons and barber shops are closed, and movie theaters, nightclubs, churches and schools remain closed as well.

There have now been 16,437 COVID-19 cases documented in SLO County since last April 1. Some 2,085 active cases were reported Jan. 22, with 14,169 people already recovered. Some 151 people have died of COVID.

There were 38 ICU beds available with eight occupied by COVID patients. Some 52 SLO County residents were in ICU with COVID, some being treated at Marian Regional Medical Center in Santa Maria.

The worst outcomes have been among people 85-older with 81 hospitalized and 78 deaths. Those 65-84 had 208 hospitalized with 55 deaths.

There have been 130 people ages 50-64 hospitalized with 13 deaths. And 105 hospitalized ages 30-49 with five deaths.

There have been 23 hospitalizations and no deaths for those 18-29 and seven children under 17 have been hospitalized with zero deaths reported.

For information on COVID-19 vaccinations in SLO County, see: RecoverSLO.org/vaccines or call the County at (805) 543-2444, now available 7-days a week, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The website will also have information on where readers can get tested for COVID, as well.

On the Parks & Recreation Commission, Drew Sidaris and Melissa Davis were appointed to the board. Sedaris was re-appointed, as he's been on the board since 2014. Others on the R&R Commission are: Mike Espino, Robert Swain and Kevin Carroll.

The Citizens Finance Advisory Committee (CFAC) had Stephen Peck named to fill a 2-year open seat. He joins Barbara Spagnola, John Martin, Bart Beckman, Homer Alexander, Lois Johnson and Tina Wener on the 7-member panel.

CFAC's main responsibility is to watchdog the City's budget, including the Measure Q special sales taxes, and also reviews costs of the City's WRF project.

And with last November's approval by voters of Measure E-20, a 1-percent local sales tax that starts in April, CFAC will have an additional \$2 million a year to keep an eye on.

The Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board (TBID), had Steve Allen re-appointed to a hotelier member at-large seat. TBID still has two vacancies — one for a hotel representative of 50-or-less rooms and the other a hotelier member at large. The City Clerk is taking applications to fill these positions.

Other TBID members are: Chris Kostecka, Nancy Dickenson, Joan Solu, Amish Patel, and Terri Ennis.

TBID advises the City on how to spend about \$2 million a year in assessment district monies promoting the City's lodging industry, but is taking on more responsibilities in 2021, as the City is moving to have TBID form a non-profit group and take over all aspects of the promotions of the City's tourism industry. That change will likely come later this spring.

And William Johnson was named to represent the City on the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments or SLOCOG. SLOCOG is a transportation-funding agency that doles out federal and State gas taxes for roads projects. Johnson replaces Chuck Spagnola on the SLOCOG advisory board.

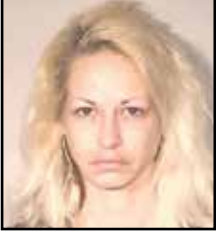
If readers would like to apply for any of the open seats, go online to: [www.morro-bay.ca.us/268/Boards-Committees-Commissions](http://www.morro-bay.ca.us/268/Boards-Committees-Commissions) and click on the "Application" link to download an application form.

## Police Arrest Man-Wife Alleged Burglars

By Neil Farrell



Chris Ryan Nunes



Lindsay Dawnelle Nunes

Morro Bay Police arrested Lindsay Dawnelle Nunes and Christopher Ryan Nunes, both 34, on felony burglary and stolen property charges following an alleged thieving spree in Arroyo Grande, Morro Bay and Atascadero.

Morro Bay Police, with an assist from Atascadero P.D., arrested a married couple allegedly in the midst of a burglary crime spree across SLO County and beyond, and reportedly catching them with a van-full of stolen items.

According to a news release, on Dec. 8, 2020 a tourist in Morro Bay told police her car was broken into while parked at Morro Rock and the thieves stole her purse with several credit cards. The thieves got busy, fast.

"It was discovered," MBPD said, "that multiple purchases were made with the stolen cards throughout the City of Morro Bay and the City of Arroyo Grande."

Video surveillance at one crime scene in Morro Bay led to the identification of a Dodge Caravan associated with the suspected crooks.

"As more evidence was collected, investigators learned that both subjects were also wanted on burglary charges in Colusa, Calif.," MBPD said.

A few weeks later, on Jan. 4, police said the man with the Caravan was reportedly spotted smashing multiple car windows using bolt cutters. Police found the Dodge the next day (Jan. 5) at Motel 6 on Atascadero Road.

Police arrested a female suspect but her alleged male accomplice gave them the slip when he took off in the van. Police said "Multiple items of stolen property were located in the motel room."

Lindsay Dawnelle Nunes, 34, was arrested and charged with suspicion of felony burglary, felony criminal conspiracy, felony possession of stolen property, and credit card fraud, a misdemeanor.

MBPD put out a "be-on-the-lookout" alert on the van and driver, whom they'd identified as Christopher Ryan Nunes, 34, after the arrest of his wife. He turned up in Atascadero on Jan. 6.

"A traffic stop was initiated," police reported, "resulting in a short foot chase into a business," where APD detained Mr. Nunes. And to the apparent surprise of police, Mrs. Nunes was free from jail and allegedly back to old tricks.

A MBPD detective responded to Atascadero "and

## Morro Bay Council Fills Board Seats

By Neil Farrell

Moro Bay City Council on Jan. 12, filled numerous open spots on its advisory boards and commissions, with many newcomers signed on to serve the City but there are still several vacancies to fill.

On the Planning Commission the City board with the most responsibility and authority, Jesse Barron was re-appointed to a new term; Bill Roschen was appointed to a full term; and Jennifer Ford was named to fill a 2-year term that came open when a commissioner resigned.

The others on the panel are Susan Stewart and Joseph Ingrassia.

Commissioners are appointed to 4-year terms and serve at the pleasure of the City Council, as do all advisory board members.

The Harbor Advisory Board is a 7-member panel where at least four must be registered to vote in Morro Bay and with each member representing a specific interest group.

Maritime Museum President Scott Mather was named to fill the Marine Oriented Business seat; Christopher Vaille as member-at-large; and Jeremiah O'Brien was re-appointed to represent the Commercial Fishermen's Organization.

Continuing members are: Gene Doughty, Cherise Hansen, Dana McClish, and Lynn Meissen.

The 7-member Public Works Advisory Board (PWAB) works with the Public Works Department and also reviews issues that arise with the City's Water Reclamation Facility project, sharing oversight with the Citizen's Finance Advisory Committee.

PWAB had five openings and got two new members: John Erwin, Ian Gaffney. The City is taking applications for the remaining three open seats. Others on PWAB are: Torrey Biles, and Doug Rogers.



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News

discovered both Christopher and Lindsay [after being released from jail] were engaged in a commercial burglary spree in the City of Atascadero. The associated vehicle was searched, and multiple items of stolen property were recovered.”

Mr. Nunes was charged with the same crimes as his wife, felony burglary, felony criminal conspiracy, felony possession of stolen property and misdemeanor credit card fraud.

Police returned some of the recovered property to several SLO County businesses but their investigation continues. Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact the Morro Bay Police Department at (805) 772-6225 or Crime Stoppers at (805) 549-STOP.

Reward Offered In Oceano Murder

The County Sheriff’s Office is asking for help in solving a 2-year-old murder in Oceano, offering a substantial reward for information that helps catch and convict the killer.

According to a news release, the Sheriff’s Department is looking for witnesses in the case of 90-year-old Lawrence Bross.

Sheriff’s spokesman Tony Cipolla said Bross’ body was found on Jan. 24, 2019 at his home in the 1400 block of Strand Way in Oceano.

“Detectives are attempting to locate a male subject who was observed visiting Bross on Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2019 around 3 p.m.,” Cipolla said. “It is believed this person may be a friend or acquaintance of Bross.”

The Sheriff’s Department is asking for information on the man in question or on the investigation. Call detectives at (805) 781-4500.

Also, Crime Stoppers is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of whoever killed Mr. Bross. Call Crime Stoppers at (805) 549-STOP.

Poly Students Advance to Semifinals in Space Challenge

For the second straight year, a team of Cal Poly mechanical engineering seniors has advanced to the semifinals of a NASA challenge to develop a device to harvest water from ice on the moon and Mars that could pave the way for extended manned space missions.

NASA and the National Institute of Aerospace announced that Cal Poly was among a dozen teams from universities across the nation named to the next round of the 2021 Revolutionary Aerospace Systems Concepts — Academic Linkage (RASC-AL) Special Edition: Moon to Mars Ice & Prospecting Challenge. The finalists will design, build and test prototype systems capable of extracting water from ice deposits buried beneath simulated lunar or Martian soil.

The Cal Poly entry is named Sub-lunar Tap Yielding eXplorer and Surface Telemetry Operations and Next-generation Excavation System, or STYX & STONES, in the 2020-21 challenge. It is just the second time the university has entered the competition.

“I am extremely proud of all of the members on this team,” said student project manager Michelle Leclere, a fourth-year mechanical engineering major. “Everyone is excited to participate in this challenge because it provides a chance to work/network with NASA engineers and engage in an extremely technically challenging project. Many of the students on our team are also interested in pursuing a career in aerospace/space exploration.

“I am so happy that we have managed to connect with each other as engineers and as friends. I look forward to seeing all of the incredible things that this team will accomplish, and I feel honored to be leading them.”

The team formed last September and had just two months to develop its proposal. Members also include: Bradley Behrens, Dominic Duran, Jacob Everest-Winkler, Tyler Guffey, Alex Martinez, Rebecca Rodriguez and Schuyler Ryan of Redding.

They met regularly online via Zoom and in-person three times to examine last year’s Cal Poly prototype and



Dominic Duran, left, the team’s structures design lead, and Tyler Guffey, who leads the electrical design, test a prototype frame for Cal Poly’s entry in the 2021 Revolutionary Aerospace Systems Concepts — Academic Linkage (RASC-AL) Special Edition: Moon to Mars Ice & Prospecting Challenge.

put together their own concept.

“This is a highly competitive challenge, and I’m very proud of the team for putting together a successful proposal,” said Peter Schuster, the team’s faculty advisor and a Cal Poly mechanical engineering professor. “They’ve done a great job with their initial design work, and I’m looking forward to seeing how they progress their design forward

Space Challenge Continued on page 9

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Police Blotter



Morro Bay Police Logs

- **Jan. 10:** Police responded at 9:11 p.m. to a disturbance in the 2000 block of Bayview. Logs indicated a 36-year-old apparent plod was arrested for suspicion of being smacked on drugs.
- **Jan. 10:** Police responded at 9 p.m. to a domestic disturbance in the 500 block of Kern. A 32-year-old apparent battleaxe was nicked for suspicion of domestic violence.
- **Jan. 10:** Police responded at 7:11 p.m. to a disturbed man acting out in the 500 block of Quintana. Logs indicated they arrested the apparently choleric fellow, 46, for suspicion of being rat-arsed in public, possession of drugs and paraphernalia, which explains a lot.
- **Jan. 10:** Police were called at 10:38 a.m. regarding a man suspected of drinking while driving. When they stopped the car at Hwy 1 and San Jacinto the driver, 55, had stepped out of his car but the officer noticed a half-pint bottle of hooch lying on the passenger side floorboard. Police ran the guy’s name and discovered he had a suspended license. He was nicked for no license and having an open container.
- **Jan. 9:** Someone found an undisclosed treasure in the 500 block of Main and gave it to police. Then officers filed a located-missing-person report, apparently making a find of their own.
- **Jan. 9:** Police responded at 1:49 p.m. to a report of someone driving erratically in the Albertson’s parking lot. Logs indicated they stopped the vehicle and the driver, 35, was nicked for suspicion of driving on a toot, possession of drugs and paraphernalia. He was checked into the County B&B.

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- **Jan. 9:** Police got a “notice of suspension for non-compliance priority re-examination” on someone’s competency to drive, which bodes ill for the rest of humanity.
- **Jan. 8:** Some apparent vandalass damaged an innocent car on Hwy 1.
- **Jan. 8:** Two people found some undisclosed junk and turned it over to police.
- **Jan. 7:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 9:24 p.m. in the 400 block of Quintana. The 24-year-old lass had four bench warrants and police added allegations of possession of paraphernalia and being stewed to the tomato’s list of woes.
- **Jan. 5:** Police contacted a regular customer at 7:15 p.m. in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd. Logs indicated the 36-year-old regular customer was arrested for suspicion of being UTI, possession of meth, and a parole violation. She was booked into the Parkinson Plaza.
- **Jan. 5:** Police were at Lila Keiser Park at 12:38 a.m. contacting a suspicious woman. The 27-year-old was nicked for suspicion of possessing drug paraphernalia. While speaking with the belle of the ball, some dude walks up to them and when they ran his name discovered the dingus had a warrant. Then at 1:03 a.m. and still at the park, police contacted another suspicious man, 50, who was arrested for allegedly being under the influence and possessing a crack pipe. The three stooges went to jail.
- **Jan. 4:** Police found a suspicious trailer parked in the 1000 block of Kennedy Way. They discovered that it was stolen from Shelter Const., which apparently didn’t even know it was missing and notified the CHP they had found it.
- **Jan. 4:** Police got a courtesy report from the Simi Valley P.D. detailing an alleged sexual assault incident involving two minors.
- **Jan. 3:** A fellow reportedly got a little lighter in the booty when he lost his wallet at Albertson’s on Quintana Road. Ironically, about 6 hours earlier, someone found a wallet in the 500 block of Atascadero Rd.
- **Jan. 3:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 10 a.m. at Main and Atascadero Road. Logs indicated the apparent bust-a-fooligan, 33, was nicked for suspicion of being higher than the stacks on drugs.
- **Jan. 2:** Police responded to a disturbance at 10:30 p.m. in the 600 block of La Loma Ave. A 58-year-old raucous chap was arrested for getting sloppy in public.
- **Jan. 2:** Someone found a wallet at City Park in the 700 block of Harbor and sometime earlier, someone found something or other somewhere in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd., logs weren’t very specific.
- **Jan. 1:** A local fellow celebrated the end of 2020 in County lockup after he allegedly vandalized a building in the 2900 block of Main. The misbegotten knave, 62, was cited and released from the police station, no doubt after getting a taste of what handcuffs feel like.

Sheriff Arrests Nipomo Prowler

The County Sheriff’s Department arrested a Nipomo man on suspicion of prowling and burglary after he reportedly broke into two different homes and assaulted the women who live in them.

It started with a 9-1-1 call at 3:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 22, and deputies responded to the 200 block of North Burton St., in Nipomo for a report that a strange man had forced his way into a home and “grabbed a female victim. The suspect left prior to law enforcement’s arrival,” Sheriff’s spokesman Tony Cipolla said.

At 5:45 that same morning, deputies got a report of a burglary in progress in the 100 block of E. Tefft St., Nipomo. “It was reported,” Cipolla said, “that a male suspect was inside of a residence and had grabbed a female victim. The suspect left prior to law enforcement’s arrival. In both cases, neither female was hurt.”

Sheriff’s investigators believed it was the same fellow in both cases and appealed to the public for information. The case broke open quickly.

On Jan. 23, Cipolla said, “Sheriff’s detectives along with assistance of the public, identified and located the burglary suspect who was wanted for two incidents in Nipomo.”

The suspect was identified as Kammeron Anderson, 25 of Nipomo. “Detectives with the Sheriff’s Special Operations Unit located Anderson at a relative’s home in Nipomo,” Cipolla said.

Anderson was arrested for suspicion of residential burglary “with additional charges pending,” Cipolla said. He was booked into County Jail. No additional suspects are outstanding in this case, Cipolla said.

“The Sheriff’s Office would like to thank the public for providing tips and assistance,” Cipolla said, “which led to the apprehension of Anderson.”

The investigation continues and the Sheriff’s Department is seeking anyone from the Downtown Nipomo area where the home invasions took place for any video-doorbell camera or security camera footage they might have from midnight to 7 a.m. on the 22nd. Contact detectives at (805) 781-4500.



Kammeron Anderson

- **Dec. 31:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 8 p.m. in the 1200 block of Main. The 53-year-old zig-zagged fellow was arrested for suspicion of being schwasted on drugs and possession of a crack pipe.
- **Dec. 31:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 6:30 p.m. in the 1300 block of Main. The 34-year-old Fresnoid had a suspended license, and was cited and released, and the car was turned over to a passenger who actually has a driver’s license. Yet another case of arrives on vacation and leaves on probation.
- **Dec. 31:** Police responded at 3:30 p.m. to a disturbance in the 200 block of Morro Bay Blvd. A 34-year-old squirt was nicked for suspicion of getting squashed in public.
- **Dec. 31:** Police contacted an under-aged boy or girl at 1:30 p.m. in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd., and cited the little snot waffle for suspicion of possessing the evil weed.
- **Dec. 31:** Police took a report of stolen bicycles at 11 a.m. in the 1700 block of Embarcadero, as the tourist tax is again levied on naively unsuspecting visitors.
- **Dec. 30:** At 11:52 a.m., police responded to a disturbance in the 400 block of Atascadero Rd. Logs indicated they gave an upset lady a 72-hour timeout with County Mental Health.
- **Dec. 30:** According to logs, a man in the 500 block of Embarcadero twice called 9-1-1 reportedly for a non-emergency, and told the dispatcher that “he loved her.” Officers spotted the love struck one, 39, after he stopped his car in the middle of the road. He was of course arrested for suspicion of driving deep in his cups.
- **Dec. 29:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:45 p.m. in the 1400 block of Quintana. Logs indicated the driver, 18, had a suspended license, which led to his being searched and arrested for suspicion of driving wasted on drugs and possessing Xanax without a prescription. He was taken to French Hospital for a bloodletting and then to the hoosegow to sleep it off.
- **Dec. 29:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 8 p.m. at Rite Aid. The 22-year-old scofflaw had a warrant. He was cited and released with his next bench warrant.
- **Dec. 29:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:37 a.m. on Hwy 41 heading out of town. Logs indicated the 36-year-old driver was arrested being forshnicked on drugs.
- **Dec. 28:** Police contacted a 22-year-old woman at 9:21 p.m. in the 1600 block of Main. Logs indicated she was allegedly in possession of Xanax without a prescription and was cited and released to go replenish her stash.
- **Dec. 28:** Police responded at 10 a.m. to the La Serena Inn in the 900 block of Morro where they contacted a 27-year-old fellow whom they arrested for suspicion of trespassing, burglary, defrauding an innkeeper and possession of stolen property. Secret agent Double-O I.Q. was tossed into the gaol.

MBFD Fights Suspicious Fire



A suspicious fire at a home in Morro Bay.

The Morro Bay Fire Department fought a suspicious fire last month, saving a home from being destroyed just days before Christmas.

According to a news release from MBFD Capt. Scott Subler, they responded at 6:25 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 23 to a report of a house fire in the 600 block of Bella Vista St.

No one was home at the time and there were no injuries to citizens or firefighters, according to the report.

The fire was contained in about 20 minutes after firefighters arrived and the fire damage was contained to the small area where it started. The rest of the house sustained smoke and heat damage including the attic.

Morro Bay was assisted by Cal Fire Engine 15 from Los Osos and a dozen firefighters responded to the scene.

Damage was estimated at \$70,000 to the home and a contents loss of \$15,000.

“The cause of the fire is under investigation and is suspicious in nature,” Capt. Subler wrote.

Anyone with information on the events in the area around the time of the fire is asked to contact Capt. Subler at (805) 772-6242.

In the photo, firefighters gear up to fight the early-morning house fire Dec. 23 on Bella Vista Street. Photo courtesy MBFD



News

Space Challenge From page 7

over the next couple of months.” NASA has confirmed water on the sunlit surface of the moon and ice at the poles in addition to extensive subsurface water-ice deposits at mid to high latitudes on Mars. In December of 2022, the agency will send its Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover to the moon’s south pole, the same area where the first woman and next man will land later this decade under the Artemis program. VIPER, a mobile golf cart-size robot, will roam several miles looking for water ice to give NASA surface-level detail of where water is and how much may be available to use.

Being able to harvest and use that water is another feat. The innovation challenge for the university teams aims to advance critical technologies needed to make it possible. The teams will design and build hardware that could identify, map and drill through various subsurface layers, then extract water from a 600-pound ice block in a simulated off-world test bed.

“The ability to access water — wherever you are — is crucial to future human space exploration,” said NASA’s chief technologist Douglas Terrier. “Equally important is the willingness for NASA to continually seek fresh approaches. These bright undergraduate and graduate students will compete with each other, but also learn from each other, while we all strive to solve such a fundamental challenge.”

Leclerc, who will graduate with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in spring of 2022, said: “STYX & STONES is the official name of our prototype as well as what we like to call our team in the senior design class. Our prototype will include two main components: a masonry drill bit and an auger-heater probe hybrid tool.

“The masonry drill bit will create a hole in the Martian/lunar overburden (soil) using the force from a rotary hammer. The heater probe tool will then be moved to align with the hole and driven into the loosened overburden using the force of a small hand drill. The heater probe will melt ice using a cartridge heater and hot waterjet, then finally deliver water via a peristaltic pump and a two-stage filtration system.”

Last year’s Cal Poly team, STYX, was also a semifinalist, before the competition was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, that team completed an initial build/test of their system, and this year’s team was inspired by their work.

“Some of the technologies used in the original STYX proposal are planned to be continued in this year’s proposal,” she said. “However, our use of the name is primarily an homage to last year’s incredible team. They spent some time with us at the beginning of the project catching us up on their ideas and struggles that helped pave the way for



Bradley Behrens of Nipomo, who is the team’s water processing lead, with Cal Poly’s entry in the 2021 Revolutionary Aerospace Systems Concepts — Academic Linkage (RASC-AL) Special Edition: Moon to Mars Ice & Prospecting Challenge.

our team’s success. We are very grateful for their support, and we wanted to reflect that in our team name.”

And the name refers to a comeback of sorts, she added, to the competition and from “the many struggles and tragedies faced throughout 2020” that the pandemic forced on everyone, Leclerc added.

In addition to Cal Poly, other semifinalist schools are: Auburn University; Colorado School of Mines; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Northeastern University (with Design Automation Associates); San Diego State University (with Collins Aerospace); South Dakota State University; Stevens Institute of Technology; State University of New York Polytechnic Institute; Texas A&M University; University of Pittsburgh; and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Semifinalists receive a \$5,000 stipend to begin building their systems during the next three months. Judges will select finalists in March. Finalists will get an additional \$5,000 stipend to demonstrate their systems for a panel of judges that will include NASA engineers and researchers along with industry experts.

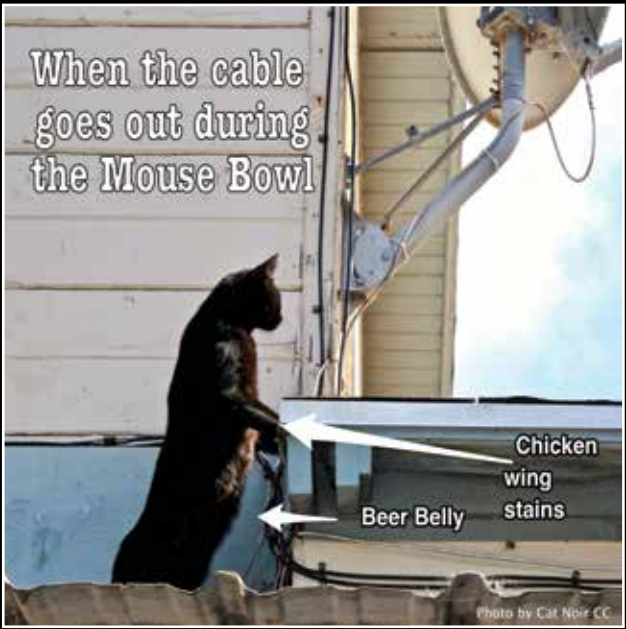
Leclerc said the Cal Poly team looks forward to building its formal prototype.

“We are very excited to get started,” she said. “We have some very complex parts that will be challenging to manufacture, but we have a team of rigorous problem-solvers who are all ready to learn new techniques to make it happen.”

During the competition, finalists will harvest as much water as possible from simulated slices of lunar and Martian surfaces. They will also participate in a poster session, presenting on the differences between operating their hardware on Earth versus the moon and Mars and explaining any adaptations their prototypes would need for each destination.

The Moon to Mars Ice and Prospecting Challenge is managed by the National Institute of Aerospace and is sponsored by NASA’s Office of the Chief Technologist, Science Mission Directorate, and Space Technology Mission Directorate, with support from the Human Exploration Operations Mission Directorate’s Advanced Exploration Systems and Langley Research Center’s Systems Analysis and Concepts Directorate. Industry sponsors include Honeybee Robotics, Aercon and Pancopia.

To learn more about the Moon to Mars Ice & Prospecting Challenge, visit: <http://specialedition.rascal.nianet.org/>.



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Community

New Butcher Shop  
a Throwback

Story & Photo By Neil Farrell



The owners of the new Morro Bay Butcher & Deli, located at the corner of Harbor and Main Streets in Morro Bay are from left: Jillian Montgomery, Geoff Montgomery and Evan Martz.

The newest business in Downtown Morro Bay is a throwback to the days when every little town had a butcher shop and is a way for the three owners to integrate into their adopted home.

Jillian and Geoff Montgomery and partner Evan Martz — each in their mid-30s — opened the Morro Bay Butcher & Deli Store, at the corner of Main and Harbor Streets, on Dec. 22 filling in the former home of TKD Surf Shop, a clothing store that closed suddenly some years ago.

The Montgomerys and Martz moved to the Central Coast 3-years ago from Jackson, Wyo., a small, tourist town not much bigger than Morro Bay and similar in many ways, explains Geoff, talking over his shoulder as he cuts a huge hunk of beef, a facemask muffling his words.

The trio had a booth at the Saturday Downtown Farmer’s Market starting last August, and were regular sellers until the new shop was ready to open.

Geoff says in Wyoming he used to manage three, small markets, all with butcher shops inside. “We got spoiled by good meat,” he laughs.

Some 2-years ago, he adds, he started working at the Arroyo Grande Meat Co., which piqued his interest in a shop of his own.

They started looking for a location to open, Jillian says, and when the Morro Bay location came available,

they jumped on it. They’ve put a lot of work into the place, including beautiful wood floors, meat cases and a full commercial kitchen.

Geoff says they looked around the area for a place with good meats and while Spencer’s and Albertson’s Markets have butcher shops, they don’t have that special, one-on-one relationship like old-time butchers had with their customers. “There’s no personal interaction,” he says.

He says in his experience, customers like that personal relationship, they like to ask questions about the different cuts, about marinades and seasonings, and perhaps most importantly, they want tips on how to cook different cuts of meat.

He notes that the location, while not having a parking lot, gets a lot of foot traffic and with Martz (the cook) making deli sandwiches for takeout, they’ve gotten good response so far. They don’t plan to put any tables inside the shop, as Geoff says there are much better views down on the Embarcadero and at the beach to enjoy while eating lunch.

“We’re an Old World butcher shop,” Geoff says, “with a modern twist. There’s no sawdust on the floor, which would be kind of cool, but hard to keep clean.”

Adding the full kitchen will allow them to reduce wastes. Jillian says their goal is to have zero waste of the meats, so when they put cuts out that don’t sell right away, they’ll cook them up for the deli. “We give food a second life,” she says, “the kitchen is key to that.”

Geoff says he didn’t go to college and study food science, but learned the old-fashioned way — on the job. “I worked for small markets that each had really good butcher counters,” he says. As he was the manager, he gravitated towards that.

One of their business goals, Geoff says, is public education, teaching their customers about the meats, the various cuts, and ways to cook it so it isn’t tough, or as he puts it “chewy.”

“Chewy is not necessarily a bad thing,” he explains. For example many people think a sirloin steak is tough but a sirloin “is more flavorful than a filet.”

Their ultimate goal is to buy direct from local ranchers, who he says want a way to get their local livestock into local restaurants and more directly to the local consumers. So they plan to increase purchases from local ranchers and producers, and are looking for a nearby slaughterhouse to start the process of turning a 4-legged, 1,000-pound steer into Sunday dinner.

“We want to be 80 percent local products — beef, pork and chicken — by the end of the year,” Geoff says. They will also eventually have a display case of locally sourced spices, marinades and rubs, as well as local olive oils and sausages for sale. And they will change their meat offerings as they get to know their customers better.

“We don’t want to carry what looks nice if people don’t want it,” Geoff says. And people from different areas favor different meats, for example, at the Arroyo Grande shop, they didn’t sell sirloin, he says, but in Morro Bay, they sold a case of it in the 6 days since they’ve been open.

Jillian, who is originally from Wisconsin, understandably is interested in locally produced cheese and there are a lot of small local dairies and cheese makers they want to work with.

“There is a lot of agriculture here,” she says, “but how do you get your hands on it?”

Geoff says the beef produced locally is sold to big packinghouses, mixed in with beef from across the U.S. and sent out to markets. “Our mission,” he says, “is to give farmers in this area a showcase for what they do, and they do it well in my opinion.”

“Meat,” he adds, “is a lot like wine. It picks up the flavors of the area it is raised in, if done properly.”

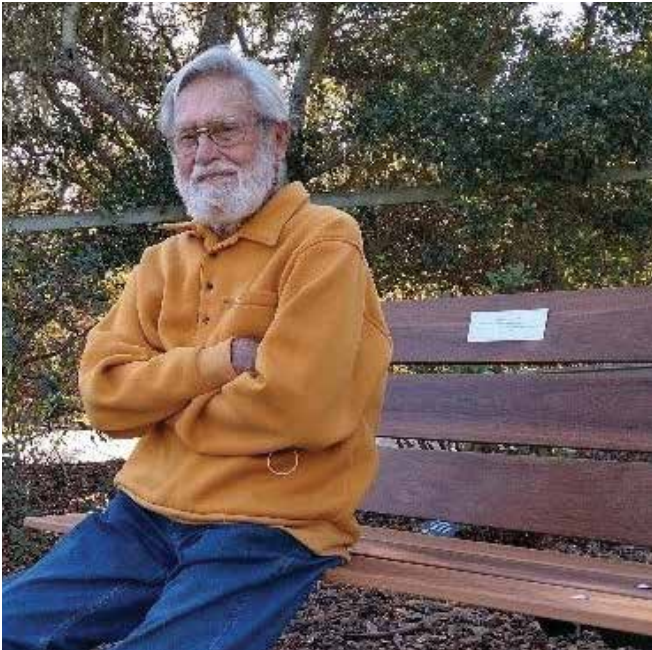
He likes the beef producers that take special care when finishing off the plumping up of their livestock, forgoing things like yellow corn as the cattle near harvest time.

They’re really happy with the warm reception they say they’ve gotten since opening in December and look forward to integrating more into the fabric of their adopted home.

“This is where we’ve decided to live,” Jillian says. “We want to be part of the community.”

Artist Art Van Rhyn  
Honored by Greenspace

By Jill Turnbow



Cambria artist Art Van Rhyn sits on a bench dedicated to him by Greenspace, the Cambria Land Conservancy. Photo submitted

Long-time Cambria resident and a legend among the locals, Art Van Rhyn has been honored with a bench by the directors of Greenspace, the Cambria Land Conservancy.

“I feel really honored and so appreciative of the bench,” said Van Rhyn. “It really came out of the blue.”

Decades ago, Art was one of the founders of Greenspace, an organization that protects and enhances the coastal area. “I was at the very first meeting, before Greenspace was even established,” he said.

Since forming in 1988, the non-profit developed parks and preserved historical sites and natural areas. The commemorative bench was installed in one such place, the Native Plant Garden at the triangle between Wilton and Ramsey. Greenspace oversees the space.

Van Rhyn, a prolific artist, and wife Patty moved to Cambria in 1983 and built their home and art studio right on Moonstone Beach Drive.

“You are not a true Cambrian until you have an original Art Van Rhyn on your wall,” said Wayne Attoe, former Greenspace president.

Since moving to the area, Van Rhyn has spent countless hours volunteering for many non-profit organizations in the area including Cambria Center for the Arts and Coast Union schools. He also once served on the Cambria Community Services District Board. Many people know him as the cartoonist for The Cambrian and for leading a group of plein air painters known as “The Wednesday Irregulars.”

“The Wednesday Irregulars still go out from time to time but it’s not the same since COVID”, said Art. “But, we will rise again!” Art’s gallery has been closed since last March, due to the lockdown but hopes to reopen someday. Art says, “At 91 years old, I’m not taking any chances!”

Greenspace honored Van Rhyn for his decades of service to the community. The bench was welded by John Zinke and completed by Richard Hawley, both long-time friends of Van Rhyn. Others involved with the project include Lyn Baker, Catherine Ryan Hyde, Victoria Krasensky, John Ruml, Ann Glaser, Peggy Christiansen, and Nancy Vincent Zinke.

“We have known all along Art would get a bench when he retired,” former Greenspace director Richard Hawley said. “It’s a well-deserved honor.”

Van Rhyn had been looking forward to showing his kids the new bench when they visited during the holidays. “It seemed like a safe thing to do since it’s outside. But it’s behind a fence and Greenspace didn’t give me a key,” joked Art.

When Hawley was asked about the key, he laughed. “It’s a combination lock.”

Van Rhyn continues to donate much of his artwork to Greenspace for their fundraising auctions. One year he even donated himself with a “Take Art to Lunch” package. The bidding was fierce as he recalls. But this year Art has retired from the board.

“All the meetings are on the computer now,” he said. “I don’t have a computer, or a cell phone. But I am really proud of all the work Greenspace does and glad I was able to be a part of it for all these years.”



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Community

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



**The Cal Poly Music Department** will present a webinar titled “Entrepreneurship in Music” with guest panelists sharing methods for beginning and sustaining a career in music at 11:10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 11.

The panelists are David Cutler, professor and director of music entrepreneurship at the University of South Carolina (UofSC), and Mark Tonelli, assistant professor of guitar and entrepreneurship at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois.

“The intent of the webinar is to inform and empower college-age musicians to think entrepreneurially about their career in music,” said Arthur White, Cal Poly’s director of jazz studies and moderator of the panel. “Due to the decline in traditional career opportunities, students need to adapt with foresight, ingenuity, diversity and a well-laid out plan of attack.”

Cutler has a varied career as a jazz and classical musician, composer, collaborative musician, author, speaker and educator. Prior to his appointment at UofSC, he taught at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He has presented at music schools in the U.S. and abroad, and collaborated with and composed ensemble commissions for the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Classical Orchestra of Milan, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Korean Chamber Ensemble, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Boston Brass, and Airmen of Note Air Force Big Band.

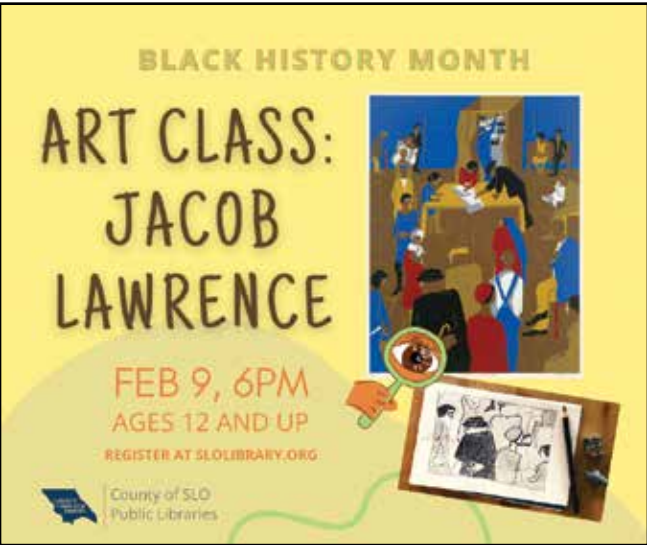
He has worked with singer Nancy Wilson, trumpeter Sean Jones, clarinetist David Krakauer, the Anderson &

Roe Piano Duo, and saxophonist Benny Golson. A leading voice on the topic of arts leadership and music entrepreneurship, he authored the book “The Savvy Musician: Building a Career, Earning a Living, and Making a Difference.”

Tonelli is a Coleman Foundation Faculty Entrepreneurship Fellow. Prior to his appointment at Millikin, he was the guitarist for the Army West Point Jazz Knights for 10 years. As a featured soloist with the band, he performed with a broad assortment of world-renowned musicians, including Bob Mintzer, Randy Brecker, Adam Nussbaum, the Boston Pops and the New York Philharmonic Brass Quintet.

Tonelli conceived of and co-edited the book “Entrepreneurship in Action: the Power of Student-Run Ventures,” based on his experience supervising the Millikin Arts Café. He has presented at major national music conferences, including the Jazz Education Network, National Association for Music Education and the College Music Society. Tonelli was a guest clinician at Cal Poly in 2019.

For more information, visit the Music Department’s calendar website, email [music@calpoly.edu](mailto:music@calpoly.edu) or call 805-756-2406.



**As part of Black History Month**, earn to draw details from Jacob Lawrence’s unique, modernist depiction of African-American migrant workers in The 1920s such as the piece shown call The Migrants Cast Their Ballots (1974). Instructor Tina Villadolid has been a Teaching Artist for the Santa Barbara Museum of Art for over 22 years.

The virtual class is for people 12 years old and up. It takes place Tues, Feb 9 at 6 p.m., via Zoom. Register at [SLOLibrary.org](http://SLOLibrary.org)

More library news - Have you checked out Sidewalk Service at the Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Morro Bay, and San Luis Obispo Libraries? Just place your holds at [slolibrary.org](http://slolibrary.org) and they will notify you when to come pick up at the door, easy peasy! Pickups happen Tuesday - Saturday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (closed 1–2:15 p.m.).

Events and Activities Continued on page 12

Obituaries

Leslie Elise Sands (1951-2020)



Leslie Elise Sands, 69, was welcomed into her Savior’s Arms on Sunday morning, November 29, 2020. Following a grueling battle with ALS, she passed away peacefully in her Los Osos home with her husband, Jon, by her side.

Born to Corinne and Larry Fuller in Pasadena, CA, Leslie was a native Californian, deeply rooted in the San Gabriel foothills. Leslie devoted her talents to caring for her husband, raising their three daughters, and active advocacy in local community and church life on the Central Coast.

Preceded in death by grandmother Ida Augusta Smith, Corinne Janet Fuller, and Lawrence William Fuller, Leslie is lovingly remembered by Jon Maynard Sands; her daughters, Elizabeth Marie Crusey, Kathryn Louise Sands, and Laura Elise Freeman; one grandson, Findley Fuller Crusey; her brother and sister, David Lawrence Fuller and Julie Lyn McIntosh; five nieces; and countless friends.

Please leave remembrances at Leslie’s blog: “Hound By The Sea.” To honor Leslie’s wishes, no services are planned. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in Leslie’s memory:

- Baywood Park Community Church (Los Osos)
- Martha Olson-Fernandez Foundation for ALS (San Luis Obispo)
- ALS Golden West Chapter (Agoura Hills)

Martha V. Goar (1938-2021)



In Memory of Martha V. Goar

Martha V Goar, 82, passed away on Tuesday, January 5th, 2021 in Morro Bay, California. She was born in Davenport, Iowa on October 25, 1938 to the late Lyle and Velma Van Zele. She graduated with a degree in Education from the University of Colorado where she served as president of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. She worked in various roles over the years as an early childhood educator.

Her later life was characterized by giving to her community through volunteering at local libraries, museums, churches and nursing homes. She lived in Iowa, Alaska, Hawaii, Colorado and Arizona and eventually moved to Morro Bay in 2012 where she served as a volunteer for the Morro Bay Library, a docent for the Morro Bay State Park Museum of Natural History, and active member of Estero Bay United Methodist Church.

She is survived by her sister, Susan Van Nuys, her sons Peter (Janel) Krull and Dan (Dina) Krull and her grandchildren, Vickie, Angela, Dani, Abi, Tesha, Gloria, Jack, Levi, Krissy and Ellie.

In accordance with her wishes, no public memorial services will be held. A charitable contribution may be made in her honor to Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ).

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Community

Events and Activities From page 11



**Folks wanting to identify native Californian** riparian shrubs even in the depths of winter can learn how with local master arborist, Rodney Thurman, at the Winter Shrub Discovery: CA Native Shrub I.D. and Propagation Workshop. This online class, through the SLO Botanical Garden, focuses on key elements of plant identification of deciduous, riparian shrubs. Learn about bud form, bud arrangement and other details that will help you identify these plants without leaves. Get some hands-on experience preparing and propagating native riparian shrubs from hardwood cuttings. Plant material, pot and potting soil will be provided for this interactive online workshop. Please provide your own pruning shears.

The Winter Shrub Discovery workshop will take place on Saturday, January 30 from 1- 3 p.m. The cost for SLOBG members is \$30 and \$35 for non-members, and includes all materials. Attendance is limited to 25 and ticket sales will end at noon on the day before the event. Details at slobg.org. Photo by Rodney Thurman.

Send your event listing at least three weeks in advance to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com. Make sure to include the who, what, why, where and when of the event and contact information. Please, type out in paragraph form rather than attaching flyers.

Major Community Tree Planting Project Completed



An enthusiastic group of 25 community volunteers from the local grassroots non-profit organization, Greening Los Osos completed a tree- planting project in Los Osos at the end of 2020. The California Conservation Corps assisted with the project.

The project was planned for earlier in the year but was delayed by the current health crisis and adjustments to the original project plans. The project consisted of planting 16 native 15-gallon trees including Monterey Cypress, Coast Live Oak and Toyon at two separate locations in Los Osos. Ten trees were planted off Pecho Valley Road adjacent to the retention basin that was once a leach field for Vista de Oro Estates and an additional six trees were planted off Ferrell Avenue near Bush Drive. Both properties are owned by the Los Osos Community Services District. The LOCSD has plans to improve the existing unpaved path through the Ferrell Ave property, which along with the trees will create a significantly upgraded open green space in the community.

The community has lost over 200 trees in the last few years due primarily to extended drought conditions and the decommissioning of septic tanks. The mission of Greening Los Osos to maintain, preserve and enhance the tree population of Los Osos grew out of this community issue. In addition to beautifying the areas, these trees will help our environment with carbon sequestration, erosion control, and creation of habitat for local wildlife.

The organization is responsible for the maintenance of the trees for the first three years. The trees will be watered

by volunteers on a regular basis by re-using flushed “water main” water. They are also negotiating the use of reclaimed water in the near future.

The project was made possible by a California ReLeaf Grant and is funded by the California Climate Investments Program with a mandate to reduce greenhouse gasses and to implement a tree-planting project on open space to augment and expand a healthy urban tree canopy in the community of Los Osos. Community partners including Sage Landscape, Miner’s Ace Hardware, Loomis Tanks, Los Osos Valley Nursery, and the Los Osos Community Services District also supported the project.

Greening Los Osos was established in 2019 because of the loss of a large number of trees in the community. The concept was originally presented by Tony Salome to the LOCAC Tree & Landscape Commi(ce, however the organization is now independent of the T&L Commi(ce and has established non-profit status with its fiscal sponsor, Ecologistics.

It is a volunteer-driven partnership of community agencies, members, and leaders to achieve tree planting and preservation goals. Why protect trees? Native trees are integral to the character and wellbeing of the local community.

For more information about tree projects or how you can help, contact info4greeninglososos@gmail.com.

Technically Speaking



Building a Computer vs. Buying one

You may have heard people, maybe even us, talking about the concept of building your own computer instead of buying one. But why build a computer when you can just buy one? There are merits to both, but building one is generally better and cheaper than buying a prebuilt from a company like Dell or HP.

The reason for this is the freedom and compatibility that accompany building a computer yourself, or having a tech do it for you. When you build a computer, you get to choose exactly what parts go into it, instead of just choosing from the 3 or 4 options offered by each company at Best Buy or Costco at any given time. This allows you to pay for what you actually need rather than paying for hardware above or below your needs because that was what was available.

Additionally, you have the freedom to change out a

part if your needs change. This may not always be the case with a prebuilt as they often use proprietary hardware making it more difficult to upgrade a single part rather than buying an entirely new computer.

That being said, buying a computer is not necessarily bad. If something goes wrong with a prebuilt, you only have one company to talk to about getting a refund or exchange. If something goes wrong with a computer you build yourself, you may have two or three companies to talk to depending on how many and which parts have failed and where they were purchased. They also require very little setup, usually just “plug and play” as we like to say, compared to the act of physically building the computer and not knowing if it will turn on the first time you plug it or if you missed a cable or forgot to hook up the power button to the motherboard on the inside (not that this cannot be remedied quickly).

Chad Crawford is the owner of QuickTech in Los Osos located at 212110th Suite #A. They can be reached at <https://quicktechcomputers.com/> or (805) 806-0165.

Send your questions to [chad@quicktechcomputers.com](mailto:chad@quicktechcomputers.com).

Billabong Photo Shoot at Maritime Museum



The Morro Bay Maritime Museum was recently the scene for a photo shoot for Billabong Clothing Co., based in Australia, according to Museum President Scott Mather.

A model in a two-piece bathing suit was photographed posing amongst the various boats and items on display. Mather submitted photos taken by another volunteer who came across the shoot when he arrived to open up on Friday, Jan. 15. Mather said they had no idea their facility was being used, but thought it pretty cool nonetheless. It’s unknown where or when the photos might appear, presumably in some kind of advertising campaign. Submitted photo



What are you doing constructively during this negative time of the pandemic?

Many friends and neighbors I hear are catching up on old resolutions like cleaning out the garage or replanting the garden — all good ideas.

In the meantime, I enjoy painting. During this hibernation time I have been painting (with my left hand yet). To begin the process, I set up a still life – that means placing objects of interest like flowers and collectables in a balanced position on a colorful background. I buy my flowers from Christine Marshalls’ flower stand – a very convenient outdoor flower shop. Her outstanding (\$10) flower arrangements are placed in water filled buckets. You can select the bouquet you like and leave money in a small open slotted box.

This flower stand has been in business several years after Christine’s flower shop in Los Osos closed.

To avail yourself of the opportunity of buying flowers

on the run so to speak, here are the directions. From Los Osos Valley Road go north on South Bay Blvd. to the first stop light, where a flowers for sale sign is posted. Turn right! Proceed about a block, and on the left side of the road a wooden stand will be in view. Make a U-turn into the driveway and park alongside the stand where you will be able to select a bouquet from set up buckets.

Now it’s bragging time. I like to paint with oils, but pastels offer the most luscious colors especially for the flower I buy at a flower stand. Watercolors are fun to work with too. Some folks think watercolors are difficult because they can run on the paper and make a mess. The fun of painting, to me, is to work and wait to see how the project will turn out, what the final results will be. Now back to work!





Community

The ‘Inn at Rose’s Landing’ is Now Open

By Neil Farrell



Morro Bay’s newest boutique motel has a robust set of offerings, from customized rooms, some with views of the bay and Morro Rock, comfortable outdoor patio spaces with fire pits, and even two special-priced, affordable rooms, courtesy of the Coastal Commission.

Doug Redican, who has owned Rose’s Landing, 725 Embarcadero since about 1987, is pleased with how his conversion of a second-story restaurant space into a 10-room motel turned out, though it cost more than he anticipated.

Redican explained that when guests check in at the Inn at Rose’s Landing, they’ll get a complimentary bottle of fine wine, and in the room they’ll find a box of chocolates from his daughter’s business, Kelli’s Candies, located on the building’s ground floor.

Glasses and a wine opener are in the rooms, he said, while showing a reporter the brand new motel lobby that faces the side street parking area on the building’s northern side.

The lobby was a small retain space created with his previous major remodel of the waterfront lease site, back in 2002. So Redican has done two multi-million dollar remodels to Rose’s in less than two decades.

This latest remodel cost \$3.4 million, he said.

According to the motel’s website, “All rooms are furnished with plush linens, Keurig coffee makers, HD TV, Premium channels, refrigerators, in-room safes, and occupancy sensors that adjust the room thermostat as you come and go.

“Some rooms have an in-room fire-place, bay-front patio, outside fireplace and lounge area, coffee tables, work desk, or breakfast nook.”

The new motel makes use of some of Rose’s existing features like an elevator, indoor stairway and large deck on the southern side. That deck plays a big part in the new motel’s amenities, with three private patios connected to rooms and other seating areas with fire pits reserved for the guests whose rooms don’t have a private balcony.

It is separated from the public access-ing it by a security gate, so while the public can walk up the outdoor stairs onto a small landing for the view, people can’t access the motel deck.

Two of the rooms are set at “afford-able” rates, a requirement put into the permits by the Coastal Commission. Redican said the agency and the City used a complicated formula to come up with what they consider an affordable rate of \$149 a night plus taxes, which is close to the cur-rent average room rate in town, and a real

bargain on the Embarcadero.

Redican said the price was set 3-years ago while the project was still undergoing permitting. It is subject to annual increases for inflation, he said, but for now it’s set at \$149 a night.

They also offer special deals for AAA members, AARP/seniors, and government rates.

There is a fully handicap-accessible room and others that don’t have water views, but the jewels are three large rooms that overlook the bay and Morro Rock.

He hired Design Collaborative of San Luis Obispo to design the project. “She did a terrific job,” Redican said.

They feature the Rose’s Inn project on the company’s website. “With a beach vibe and antique brass finishes typically found on the boats that are a stone’s throw from the private balconies. Design Collabora-tive brought this hotel to fruition from the beginning stages with the architect to the finishing touches of the logoed bathrobes. A complete construction package, furnish-ing & art package, construction administra-tion, procurement and installation where all a part of this project.”

The company has designed many other projects including wineries and restaurants (see: <https://designcollaborative.design>).

The remodel included major work on the Harborwalk, a pedestrian pathway along the water that will some day stretch the length of the Embarcadero.

It was a huge expense that included installation of enormous steel I-beams tied back to the land, numerous new pilings and the walking deck. That work was done by Associated Pacific in Morro Bay and was a major expense that frankly will see little monetary return for the business.

The 10-foot wide walkway has a steel grating floor and custom-made aluminum, welded railings. It includes two “gangways” on either end. One is connected to a small public pier at the street end and the other connects back to a small plaza on the south side of the building.

Redican shook his head and said it was more like something you’d need on the piers of San Francisco, where there is much more foot traffic.

The motel guests also have a restaurant below, which during the COVID business restrictions is only able to offer takeout.

That first floor restaurant was also remodeled with a new semi-enclosed patio and new glass doors that will merge the patio with the dinning room once they get back to normal operations.

And it still has that beautiful, boat-shaped, wooden bar that Rose’s is famous for. Redican said they refinished it during the remodel.

He said they will eventually be avail-able for booking on the major Internet booking sites but for now, they’re booking rooms directly online, see: [www.inna-troslending.com](http://www.inna-troslending.com), or call (805) 254-0700.

Chamber Spotlight Awards

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce shines a spotlight on businesses who are adapt-ing, updating and thriving during rough times created by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Chamber presented **Grape Leaf**, 844 Main St., with the Spotlight Award for their resiliency during the pandemic.

“They’ve adjusted their menu and operations to continue feeding our com-munity - and we are especially thankful for their pizzas! Please stop by and show Abe and Marie some love,” said Chamber representatives.

Grape Leaf serves Middle Eastern food from family recipes, specialized coffee drinks and the recently introduced wood-fired pizzas.



**Three Stacks and a Rock Brewing Company**, 3118 Main St., also received a Spotlight Award this month for their resilience during the pandemic.

“They’re serving food and beer to go, and are one of favorite places to drink craft brew in SLO County,” the Chamber said.

Three Stacks serves craft beers and cinder along with selections from an ever changing food menu.

Also in the spotlight were **Sunshine Health Foods and Shine Café**, 415 Morro Bay Blvd.

“They’ve gone above and beyond to keep their employees and patrons safe during the pandemic, and continue to deliver exceptional service to our communi-ty,” the Chamber said.

Shine is a vegan and vegetarian venue that uses local, organic ingredients and provides gluten-free options. Sunshine stocks a variety of natural and organic food from the local area as well as unique items from around the world.



Joe White and the team at **Port House**, 885 Embarcadero, were also honored.

“They’ve been open, closed, take out only, outside dining added, and a mix of all of those since the pandemic hit in March,” the Chamber said. “It hasn’t been easy, yet they continue to ensure we are well fed! Thank you Port House.”

Port House offers a lunch and dinner menu featuring steak, pasta and seafood.

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Hires From page 1

(mostly in the recreation department), elimination of the Tourism Department, and significant pay cuts taken by remaining City employees — supervisors, department heads and administration.

But after the mid-year budget review in December, the City felt confident enough in an economic recovery that the Council allowed the job to be filled.

“We swore in one new officer,” Cmdr. Watkins said, “Luis Martinez from Lompoc, which was on hold since April. The position was frozen for budgetary reasons from COVID. We were able to finally fill that position and then had a sergeant leave and go to another agency in November.”

So the department continues to have one empty officer position, now stemming from Sgt. Hufstetler’s promotion, and Cmdr. Watkins said they are recruiting now to try to fill that job.

As for why a police sergeant would leave MBPD for a deputy Sheriff’s job, Cmdr. Watkins said it’s the pay difference. “A Sheriff’s deputy makes enough for a sergeant to leave our position. Sad, we work hard to get them and they leave because of money.”

It’s a familiar refrain, and not the first time MBPD has lost an officer to the Sheriff’s Department. It’s happened about six or seven times over the past 20 years or so, including the loss of a second in command and even a police chief when former Chief Tim Olivas left to become Sheriff Ian Parkinson’s Undersheriff. Olivas is now retired.

Cowen From page 1

way by the chamber board and Executive Director Erica Crawford. He believes the partnership with City leadership will grow stronger as they continue to network local and regional relationships that will benefit business development in Morro Bay.

“As someone who grew up in Morro Bay, I see so much opportunity.” Cowen hopes the chamber will continue to be that collective voice to maintain community integrity while working to support current and future businesses. “If we’re all in this together then it is time for all of us to invest whatever time and funding we can spare to make our chamber inclusive, engaged and participating. When we speak with one voice we can better help each other.”

Cowen recognized Morro Bay’s assets early in life. “When I was eight my family made the decision to move to the Central Coast from San Clemente mostly for my health. I had asthma and smog was getting worse.” His dad had grown up in Arroyo Grande so knew the area. “I remember seeing the Stacks for the first time. I felt both fear and excitement. Fear of change and finding new friends. My sister and I quickly realized the freedom Morro Bay offered. We could safely go anywhere.”

Cowen also found instant love when his dad introduced him to surfing and fishing. His mother would say, “You never come home dry.”

His schooling was all local, including Cuesta College, but his real education was on the job. Work also fed his joy-

ful times on a surfboard or in a boat. He delivered newspapers for the Tribune and Sun Bulletin. At age twelve, he washed dishes at Pizza Port, the business he would later own. At thirteen, he began almost 30 years in retail by sweeping floors at Wavelengths across from City Park. As Wavelengths grew he worked his way up to manage the business during the last fifteen of the 26 years he was with the company.

“I credit Mike and Phyllis Hischier for teaching me about business and so much more.” Cowen said. Being on the water continued to be an adult passion.

He loved working for Harbor Patrol Master Eric Endersby. “About 2000, I joined the ranks of the Morro Bay Harbor Reserves at the same time as Becca Kelly [currently a Harbor Patrol supervisor].”

It was a Wavelengths customer that inspired him that investing in a local business could become a decent retirement plan, but Cowen was savvy enough to take a deep dive to see if restaurant ownership was a good fit. For months he balanced life between careers at Wavelengths, Harbor Reserves, and Pizza Port. He officially became a small business owner in 2005 and by 2006 he had moved on from Wavelengths and the Harbor Reserves.

Then another retail business opportunity enticed him in 2006, Morro Bay Surf Shop. The partnership with Nathan Ditmore and Anthony Randazzo was a successful enough investment to expand to SLO, however inflation attacked the entire marketplace and the business closed in 2010.

Cowen was happy he could immerse himself in his back-up plan as general manager of Pizza Port. “It was a tough time for most businesses. But like today [during COVID-19], we learn to survive by reinventing ourselves.” He regularly implements those best business practices he’s learned over the years. “I call it organic marketing. It’s all relationship driven —learning our customers wants and working with other businesses to stay alive and plan to build a better business climate.”

And, since becoming a real estate associate at Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate, he believes timing has never been better to build that better business climate. “Our lifestyle in Morro Bay has been discovered.”

It was another business associate, who planted the seed for him to move from general manager to small business owner and mentor to future business owners.

“Burt Caldwell said ‘When you learn to work on the business, not in the business, it will evolve to a different level.’ I was ready to move beyond the day-to-day (at Pizza Port) knowing I could offer a living wage opportunity for the right person. I looked for a long time and finally found Melissa Davis to take over as general manager. She was doing a great job until COVID forced her to choose family first. She needed to home-school her daughter.”

Currently, Sarah Geneviro and Courtney Longis share management duties as his daytime and night managers. “I like to find individuals who are interested in learning how to run a business, but already understand customer relations. That’s the harder skill to teach.”

Cowen hopes all of Morro Bay will join the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce’s Zoom celebration on February 12 at 5 p.m. As he accepts the chairmanship role, he plans to challenge his new board team to move forward in 2021 and thank fellow board members for their service, congratulate the honorees Jack Smith, Chuck Stoll, Walter Heath’s Morro Bay in Bloom, and Fitness & Therapy Works for their leadership and investments in Morro Bay.

Feeding Students From page 1

program. “Before the pandemic, we were all about local farms and local foods and what could we find, it was really fun,” said Primer. “As soon as the pandemic hit, we realize that a lot of these fun, farm-friends we’re going to be faced with some difficult challenges. We saw pretty quickly that we wanted to make sure that we were being intentional with our spending. We wanted it to go to as many of our local food businesses and farms as possible. If we didn’t do that, we weren’t holding true to the values that we had prior to the pandemic. These farms and food businesses may not

be here for us to purchase from in the future, if we don’t purchase from them now.”

As an example of that, a relatively unknown fruit will soon show up in the take home bags.

The school district recently purchased jujubes from Alisha Taff’s Rock Front Ranch in Santa Maria where the fruit has been grown since 2014. Also known as red or Chinese date, they are an ancient, sacred, profoundly nutritious fruit originating in the Middle East and Asia.

“Being given the opportunity to share our organic jujube fruit with the students and families of the school district,” said Taff, “enriches opportunities to promote health, nutrition and educational opportunities to share information about community, food systems and how our fruit fits into the network”

SLCUSD signed on for 350 pounds of jujubes. The fruit has a rich history across the globe and is culturally relevant to many people. It has been globally studied for its health benefits. It can be eaten both fresh and dried.

“They have a very sweet taste, almost like a brown sugary kind of note,” Primer said. “I think they’d be great in baked goods. We’re actually going to try some muffin or bread items just to get some ideas on other ways to enjoy them than just in their pure form or dry form. We’ve also heard that you can make a jujube jam, so we are going to test some of that.”

Not only is the district introducing the red dates to young palates, but there is a curriculum spotlighting the fruit. Students will learn about the importance of jujubes in tandem with Chinese New Year lessons.

The fruits will be distributed in February. “We’re really building that respect, back into our food system,” Primer said. “We’re trying to educate kids and their families and show them that asking questions about where your food comes from is really important. Having a relationship with the person who’s growing your food, really is the secret to tasting the love that they’ve put into growing it.”

The meal program is contactless and the staff practices COVID-19 safety precautions. Participants can pickup food each Wednesday at Laguna Middle School in SLO or at Morro Bay High School via a drive-thru system. Food is placed in the back of the car or trunk and folks can be on their way back home.

Families can sign up for weekly meal kits at [www.slcsdfood.org](http://www.slcsdfood.org). One box/bag is provided per child under 18-years-old. Currently, children do not have to be enrolled in San Luis Coastal Unified School District to participate.

Volunteer From page 1

services to our community, including the Morro Bay Lions Club, where he serves as club president and from which he was presented the Melvin Jones Award for Outstanding Humanitarian Services,” the Chamber said.

Stoll is also on the board of the Morro Bay Maritime Museum, uses his truck to fill large tanks of water for newly planted trees with Morro Bay in Bloom, drives to and from the Food Bank each week for supplies and coordinates eye care for patrons of the Monday Night Dinners for the homeless. Stoll is also involved in the Lions Club’s Car Giveaway Program, which accepts donations of unneeded vehicles and money, repairs the cars mechanically in conjunction with Todd’s Garage, and coordinating with the Community Resource Center, gives them away to people in the community who need transportation.

He also volunteers at the annual free Community Thanksgiving Dinner.

**Fitness Works** is being honored “for their adaptation of services during the pandemic,” the news release said.

FitnessWorks/TherapyWorks is a female-owned business that was first incorporated in 1991 and currently employs 42 people but when there isn’t a pandemic closing the economy, they employ over 50 full and part-time people.

“Community health is their priority,” the Chamber said, “and the management team infuse their values of fairness and integrity into their operating model.”



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Kevin says,  
“Look for the ANT on the Door”



KEVIN O'CONNOR, President





The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce named FitnessWorks/TherapyWorks as Business of the Year.

Among the adjustments they’ve made for the pandemic to assist their clients with fitness goals, they’ve been offering online fitness-on-demand taught by familiar instructors in familiar surroundings; rented a cargo container that is filled with cardio machines and sits in the parking lot; moved large pieces of equipment into the alley behind the gym; and offered group fitness classes in the parking lot and in City parks.

“FitnessWorks adapted its business model to remain compliant with public health guidelines during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,” according to the Chamber.

**Jack Smith**, who grew up in Morro Bay, is a skateboarding pioneer who operated the Morro Bay Skateboard Museum and has hosted several World Slalom Skateboarding Championships in Morro Bay.

He first achieved fame when in the 1970s he and some high school classmates were the first people to push skateboards across the U.S.

He’s since done it three more times raising money for charity and was the first person to cross the country riding an electric-powered skateboard.

Two of his cross-country skateboards are among the collection at the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

The Chamber said Smith’s, “natural affectation as an aspirational and inspirational leader has led him to incredible accomplishments, including skateboarding across the country multiple times and achieving a Guinness World Record.”



Jack Smith, pictured in 2018, is the Jack Smith is Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce Living Treasure recipient.



Morro Bay in Bloom is the first winner of a new Non-Profit of the Year Award established by the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce.

Nicknamed “the **Bloomies**,” Morro Bay in Bloom’s numerous volunteers have for several years now worked to beautify public areas in town including the Roundabout, the traffic islands at Beach Street and the Embarcadero,

planter boxes and other streetscapes in the Downtown. They are being honored for their efforts to beautify Morro Bay’s public spaces.

Also, AGP Video, the Chamber’s Business of the Year in 2003, is producing a mini-documentary on community leadership in Morro Bay slated to debut at the virtual awards ceremony.

The Chamber thanked Engle and Associates Insurance Brokers, Central Coast Lending, Kitzman’s Culligan Water Co., and Carollo Engineers, for sponsoring production of the video.

Estero Bay News wishes to congratulate all of this year’s awardees and wish them well in 2021.

# Letter’s To The Editor Suck Yellow Cake



In my LTHO (less than humble opinion) (or Long Term Hydrology Outlook):

Los Osos development should not proceed until desalinated water is nuclear powered and distributed to Los Osos by the plant down the coast. Then, those wealthy enough to subsidize desalination can build all the mansions they want. Let THEM suck yellow cake! (Uranium, that is). Leave the basin water for the rest of us.

Anton Vesely  
Los Osos

## Give Families a Break

During our national emergencies, it is an outrage that no one is talking about the unfair tax laws on middle class families. Families should not have to pay a higher percentage in taxes (3% and more) than corporations!

Remember American families are the most important incorporation is our country. Give families the same corporate tax rates to help them through our COVID-19 emergencies. The loss of family members, heath, jobs, and businesses is overwhelming.

Families need a break. If it’s good for corporations, then why not the hard working middle classes, who are the backbone of our country!

John Paul Drayer  
Cayucos,

## MLK Scholarship Donations Still Critical

Here comes Super Bowl Sunday, and for many here on the Central Coast, that means it’s time for the Martin Luther King Jr. Chicken Barbecue.

Usually . . . But nothing is “usual” this year. A local tradition for many years, the annual barbecue raises money for The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. High School Memorial Scholarship Fund. Since 1968, the organization has been awarding scholarships to college-bound teens graduating from local high schools. But because of health and safety precautions brought about by COVID-19, the annual chicken barbecue won’t be happening this year.

Yet, your support of the scholarship fund has never been more important.

Amid the pandemic, special challenges face students who are graduating from high school and setting their sights on college. Freshman college enrollment is down 15 percent nationwide, primarily because of financial hardships brought about by COVID-19, according to figures from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Among minority students, the numbers are even higher. This fall, freshman enrollment at community colleges was down 30 percent among Black, Hispanic and Native American students.

So now more than ever, our scholarship recipients need your help. We’re asking you to celebrate Super Bowl Sunday this year by barbecuing your own chicken or whipping up another favorite dish to enjoy while watching the game.

But before you do, please go to our website (www.mlkfund.org) and click on “Donate” to make your annual, tax-deductible contribution to the MLK High School Memorial Scholarship Fund. Or send your check to: P.O. Box 1693, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

Stay home, stay well, stay safe. Enjoy the game. And just think how good that MLK Barbecue chicken is going to taste next year.

Good things are worth waiting for. But while you’re waiting, local college-bound students are still depending on you. Please donate now.

Mary Matakovich  
Board President, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. High School Memorial Scholarship Fund.

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

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