

Local Schools to Reopen in March

By Neil Farrell



The San Luis Coastal Unified School District Board of Trustees voted to reopen schools including Los Osos Middle School.

Local schools should be reopened for “hybrid” learning by the middle of March, with the youngest kids going back to school before the older kids.

The San Luis Coastal Unified School District Board of Trustees voted Feb. 16 to adopt a reopening plan put forth by District Superintendent, Dr. Eric Prater, subject to any changes that might come down from Sacramento or the CDC, should the coronavirus pandemic emerge in another wave of infections.

In Resolution No. 18-20-21, the board lays out the history of the school closures that went into effect in April 2020, what the District has done to try and keep kids learning via the Internet, and sets a schedule for when teachers would return to school and when students — by grade — can return, as well.

According to the staff report, “The Superintendent recommends the first day of in-person hybrid instruction for grades K-2 [kindergarten through second grade] shall be Thursday, March 4, 2021.

“The first day of in-person hybrid instruction for

grades 3-6 at elementary schools shall be Monday, March 8, 2021. The first day of in-person hybrid instruction for 6th graders at Los Osos Middle School and grades 7-12, if permitted to return by CDPH [California Department of Public Health] guidelines and law, shall be Monday, March 15, 2021.”

So barring a momentous spike in COVID-19 cases leading to reinstatement of the Governor’s stay-at-home orders, and schools getting closed once again, kids will be back to the classrooms at least half a day possibly in time for Spring Break.

Children have been taking online classes since the start of the pandemic nearly a full year ago. Last year’s students missed out on all the end of school activities, which for high school seniors included graduation, not to mention cancelation of all the spring sports.

This school year, the fall and winter sports have not competed either and there is hope spring sports can return when the kids go back to school.

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Police Hope Students Fall In Love With New Car

By Neil Farrell



The legendary rock band, Queen, famously sang, “I’m in love with my car...” Morro Bay Police hope their school resource officer’s new patrol vehicle has local students singing the same tune.

The 2012 Dodge Charger is the oldest vehicle in their fleet, said MBPD Cmdr. Amy Watkins, giving a reporter a peek at the sleek, black car.

Many police departments would surplus and sell a car this old, but in Morro Bay, Cmdr. Watkins said, their old patrol cars are turned into Community Volunteer cars or pool cars, vehicles available for police when they need to go out of town, like to a court appearance. This muscle car had a different future.

It was around Christmas in 2019, Cmdr. Watkins said, and Chief of Police Jody Cox wanted to do something with School Resource Officer, Gene Stuart, something the high school and elementary school kids could participate in and identify with.

It’s a similar concept to D.A.R.E. cars used by officers working that now-defunct anti-drug elementary school

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where basically there’s going to be one person left out of this whole group. So we whittled it down and my mom, brother and I were the last three people. My mom was knocking out big college guys. I was faced with a really tough decision because I had to defeat my mom — she didn’t raise me to

sister-in-law found an activity for us to do, which was axe throwing,” said Matt. “We were like, ‘Oh gosh, you know mom’s in her seventies?’ We were all laughing and having just such a great time, but at the end of the experience, they have like a King of the Mountain elimination tournament

“One of the days my

The idea was born following a gathering in Arizona with Matt’s parents and other family members, a competitive group.

“One of things that really brought us together is being really intentional with our time and doing fun things,” said Matt, who works in staffing as a head-hunter. “This was kind of like a natural fit for our interests. We love having fun, we like seeing other people enjoy themselves, and we like being active.”

The husband and wife team of Matt and Jen Corning started SLO Axe Co that is built around a “mobile axe throwing adventure trailer” used for private events such as weddings and family reunions as well as corporate team building experiences.

life.

For folks looking for a new outdoor activity to try, a Los Osos based business is open and ready to throw some fun into your

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SLO Axe Co Hits a Bull’s-Eye

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

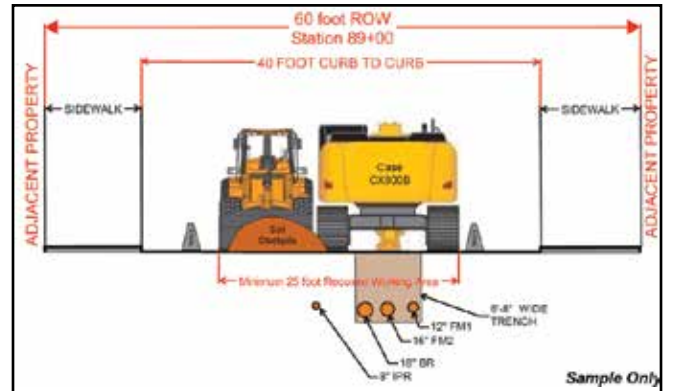


Matt Corning waits for the first person to hit the target.

where basically there’s going to be one person left out of this whole group. So we whittled it down and my mom, brother and I were the last three people. My mom was knocking out big college guys. I was faced with a really tough decision because I had to defeat my mom — she didn’t raise me to

City Lays Out Pipeline Schedule

By Neil Farrell



This diagram shows how the four necessary pipelines will be laid out in the trench for the City of Morro Bay’s Water Reclamation Facility project conveyance system.

Giant excavators have been moved into place, needed demolition of a City warehouse is completed, and trenches are being dug for Phase 2 of the City of Morro Bay’s “Water Reclamation Facility” or WRF, and residents and businesses will soon feel the impacts from the largest public works project in the town’s history.

Work began in early February on Phase 2, the 3.5-miles of pipelines needed to convey raw sewage out to the new treatment plant.

City officials and project contractors on Friday Feb. 19 held the first of what promises to be regular virtual meetings to reach out to the public and to keep businesses along Quintana Road and Main Street up to date with road closures and traffic detours.

Eric Casares of Carollo Engineers, the project manager, and Sarah Rossetto of Katz & Associates the PR firm handling outreach led the first virtual meeting.

City officials, Councilman Red Davis and Mayor John Heading were also in on the Zoom call, along with City Manager Scott Collins and Public Works Director, Rob Livick.

Collins said their goal was to “maintain absolute safety through the project.” The City was also trying to balance the needs of the public and business community with the project’s.

Casares explained that pre-construction activities — some tree removals and underground utility markings — have been underway since early February.

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Diablo Canyon Panel
Seeks Members

By Neil Farrell



Volunteers are needed for the Diablo Canyon Decommissioning Engagement Panel.

Pacific Gas & Electric is looking for volunteers for its Diablo Canyon Decommissioning Engagement Panel with three seats coming open soon.

PG&E formed the Panel in 2018 with 11 members designed to provide community input on the “ongoing decommissioning planning activities,” the company said in a news release. Deadline to apply is March 13.

“We are strongly focused on the safe and reliable operation of Diablo Canyon,” Jim Welsch, senior vice president of generation and chief nuclear officer said, “and at the same time, are planning for a safe and responsible decommissioning of the facility to begin after the operating licenses expire in 2024 and 2025. We greatly appreciate the panel’s efforts and the work they have been doing over the past few years to provide meaningful and constructive feedback that has helped to shape PG&E’s decommissioning strategies.

“We strongly encourage members of our community to submit applications to join the panel so that PG&E and this project can continue to benefit from a wide range of insights.”

PG&E has plans to shut down Diablo Canyon, the last nuclear power plant in California, starting with Unit 1 in 2024 and Unit 2 the following year, when its current federal operating licenses expire. Diablo Canyon produces 2,200 megawatts, accounting for some 10 percent of the State’s output.

The decision was reached a few years ago after negotiations with environmental groups and State regulators.

PG&E has listed several factors that contributed to the decision, including changing trends in the utility industry such as community energy agencies; State goals for clean, renewable energy sources and reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

The company was looking at a contentious battle with environmental groups and anti-nuclear energy groups over what promised to be a long and expensive licensing process through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

It was also facing having to change the cooling system at the plant, as the once-through seawater cooling system in use now, is now out of favor with the State Water Resources Control Board. The water board decided that seawater cooling systems kills too many larval sea creatures.

The SWRCB has ordered once-through cooling systems to be phased out, a decision that also helped kill plans to replace the Morro Bay Power Plant.

The Panel meets quarterly and its meetings are open to the public, though being held online during the Coronavirus Pandemic response restrictions.

Among the most important issues the Panel will discuss is the future of the thousands of acres of coastal bluffs, grasslands and oak woodlands that make up the majority of the plant property.

Diablo Canyon sits on Point Buchon between Montaña de Oro State Park and Port San Luis.

PG&E has said the decommissioning process will take many years and cost billions of dollars. The new Panel members will be announced March 29.

Anyone interested in participating on the Decommissioning Panel can apply online at: diablocanyonpanel.org or pge.com/engagementpanel.

COVID Deaths Increase,
Case Counts Dropping

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County blew past a grisly milestone in the coronavirus pandemic, even as reported daily cases dropped to double digits for the first time in months, and health officials push on with a vaccination program hampered by supply issues.

County Reaches 200 Deaths

“The County of San Luis Obispo,” reads a Feb. 9 news release from the County Health Department, “regrets to report today that 200 SLO County community members have died due to COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic.”

County Health Officer, Dr. Penny Borenstein, offered condolences. “Our deepest condolences go out to the families and friends who are grieving the loss of a loved one. These are 200 individuals in our county who lost their lives from a preventable disease.”

The worldwide trend of elderly people being hit hardest by COVID-19 shows plainly in SLO County.

“Of the 200 people who have passed away,” the County said, “102 were community members over the age of 85. Additionally, 74 deaths were from community members, ages 65 to 84. The focus remains on vaccinating these most vulnerable community members first.”

Vaccine Supply Issues

The County’s vaccine program has had to dole out the serum much slower than the “Vaccine Task Force” would like.

Nevertheless, on Feb. 10, the County opened up appointments to get the first of two shots to anyone 65-older. Trouble was they didn’t have a lot of vaccine on hand.

The County started taking appointments for the new age group, on Feb. 11 on a limited basis and prompting County officials to ask for a sacrifice.

Dr. Borenstein said, “Because we have a very limited number of vaccine doses right now, please let those most at risk for exposure and serious health outcomes get an appointment first if you can safely continue to shelter at home to reduce your risk of exposure. Everyone in SLO County will have a chance to get vaccinated against COVID-19, but those at higher risk should get their shot first.”

Demand is Huge

There are over 38,000 SLO County residents ages 65-74 but on Feb. 18 the County could only offer about 3,200 appointments, and only at the SLO clinic at Cuesta College.

It was able to administer 5,000, second doses spread over all three clinics — Cuesta, Paso Fairgrounds, and at the Clark Center at Arroyo Grande High School.

The County opened up those shot slots at 9 a.m. and they were all filled almost immediately.

On Feb. 19, the County announced it had received another shipment of the vaccine and was opening up an additional 1,500 first-dose appointments at the Paso Robles site, administered in just two days.

“These appointments will likely fill quickly,” the County said. The quick sellout signals a high demand amongst the population.

County, Cities Sign Agreement

The County realized that vaccinating everyone was simply beyond its capabilities and so the seven cities in SLO County plus the South County Fire Authority entered into an agreement to work together, sharing costs and reimbursements.

In a Feb. 9 action, County Supervisors approved the “Vaccine Assistance Agreement.”

“The timing and scale of the county-wide vaccination effort was determined to exceed the operational capacity of the County,” reads a report from Guy Savage of the County Administration Office. “The Agreement outlines eligible versus non-eligible costs for reimbursement and the process by which the County will provide reimbursement to participating agencies.”

The fire departments are to play a key role. “City and Authority support,” the report said, “will primarily come through the use of their respective fire department personnel. In some cases, cities will also provide on-site administrative support for vaccination efforts.”

County to Seek FEMA Funding

The County agreed to seek funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency or FEMA for all COVID-related expenses.

“As stated in the Agreement, should the County receive funds via FEMA, or other State or Federal sources,” the report said, “those reimbursements will be shared with the cities or Authority. Moving forward, additional agreements with parties such as Community Service Districts may be needed to maximize reimbursement from State or Federal government agencies.”

The first sign of the cooperation was establishing the vaccination clinics, which have been organized through a task force, with volunteers like Morro Bay Mayor John Heading, a pharmacist, pitching in.

“While each of the sites is capable of administering 1,000 vaccinations per day,” the report said, “smaller numbers of vaccinations are occurring due to a lack of vaccine.

“When operating on a five-day-a-week schedule, the three vaccination sites should be capable of administering a combined 15,000 shots on a weekly basis. Assuming sufficient vaccine supply, these 15,000 vaccinations would be in addition to those administered through others, such as pharmacies, doctors, or medical clinics.”

Back in December, the Federal Government appropriated \$4.5 billion to aid in the vaccine rollout. President Biden’s new COVID relief package being debated in Congress is expected to add to that funding, and, “Governor Newsom’s proposed state budget for FY 2021-22 includes \$350 million for State-sponsored vaccine distribution efforts.”

PG&E Extends Assistance Program

Pacific Gas & Electric extended a program that stopped people and businesses from having their electric and gas service shut off for non-payment.

“In response to the ongoing economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Pacific Gas and Electric Company said today it will extend the existing COVID 19 customer protections through June 30, 2021. The protections were set to expire on April 16.”

With the blessing of the Public Utilities Commission, the company also suspended re-enrollment requirements for its “California Alternate Rates for Energy Program” (CARE); waived security deposits for small commercial customers; and, eased rules on a program that gives

Estero Bay News Staff

Dean Sullivan
Owner - Publisher
dean@esterobaynews.com

Theresa-Marie Wilson
Editor
editor@esterobaynews.com

Neil Farrell
Reporter
neil@esterobaynews.com

Shari Sullivan
Marketing Director
shari@esterobaynews.com

Joan Sullivan
Jill Turnbow
Ruth Ann Angus
Judy Salamacha

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discounts to people with medical conditions by dropping a requirement that they be re-certified by a doctor. The waiver is good for one year.

PG&E also has flexible payment plans and a budget billing system to spread out energy costs and avoid unexpected high bills.

There are other discount and assistance programs, as well as programs that help weatherize homes and cut bills. See: pge.com/billhelp for information about these programs.

COVID Numbers Look Better

SLO County’s new cases saw a steady drop over the past couple of weeks, and fell to just 57 in its Feb. 19 report. Daily numbers have been in the hundreds since early last summer.

As of Feb. 19, the County reported 19,340 total COVID-19 cases since the pandemic started in March 2020. There were 706 active cases and 18,395 people have recovered from the virus.

The death toll had also climbed to 217, with 111 people ages 85-older representing the most deaths, but that might not be the whole story.

According to County health officials, “22 additional community members are likely to have died from COVID-19, but local health officials have not yet confirmed whether those deaths were in fact caused by COVID-19.”

County Says it’s No Time to Relax

The dropping numbers locally may be a promising sign, but County officials say it’s not the time to tap the brakes on prevention efforts.

“I ask of you, as I always do,” Dr. Borenstein said, “to not ease up on the gas pedal at this point. We have a vaccine, but supply is limited. Wear your mask, keep your distance, limit indoor social gatherings to your social bubble and help stop the COVID-19 deaths in our county.”

SLO County remains in the Purple Tier, signaling widespread infections under the Governor’s “Blueprint for a Safer Economy.”

But such evaluations are re-calculated weekly, so with the drop in new cases, it’s possible SLO County’s status could be upgraded soon.

The County’s COVID website continues to be the best place for information on everything from testing, to vaccine appointments and more. See: www.ReadySLO.org.

County Signs Sixth Mental Health Contract

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County approved a new \$1.7 million contract with a private mental hospital to provide lock-

down mental health services.

“With the exception of State hospitals and other acute care hospitals,” reads a staff report from County Health Agency Director, Mike Hill, “Mental Health Rehabilitation/Institutions for Mental Diseases [IMD] facilities offer the most intensive level of care in the residential care continuum.”

Plainly stated, the County is contracting with the privately-owned facility to lock up dangerous people with mental health problems, rather than try to provide services through it’s own facilities, notably the county jails.

“IMDs are locked residential facilities,” Hill said, “that are primarily engaged in providing intensive care of persons with severe mental illness, which includes medical attention, nursing care, assessment, clinical treatment and other related services. Intensive services including psychiatrist coverage are offered 24 hours per day / 7 days per week.”

Such facilities are for people who didn’t respond to traditional treatment.

“Most clients placed in these facilities have not succeeded in outpatient settings and less restrictive residential placements,” Hill explained. “Often, IMD clients have been placed under conservatorship by the courts. Although the desired outcome is to move clients to the least restrictive level in which they can be successful, a certain percentage of the population with severe mental illness will, at any given time, need the level of treatment offered in an IMD setting.”

There are different kinds of IMDs, including psychiatric hospitals; psychiatric health facilities (PHF) with over 16 beds; skilled nursing facilities with a certified special treatment program for the mentally ill; and mental health rehabilitation centers or MHRCs.

“Due to the severity of their symptoms, clients placed in IMDs are unable to live successfully in a less restrictive setting,” hill said.

Back in 2019, with the County embroiled in a controversy over the treatment of County Jail inmates with mental illnesses, including several in-custody deaths, the Board of Supervisors signed several contracts with IMD facilities.

“On July 9, 2019,” Hill told Supervisors on Feb. 2, “your Board renewed contracts with five contractors for IMD residential placements: Dycora Transitional Health & Living-San Jose, LLC; Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.; CF Merced Behavioral, LLC, dba Merced Behavioral Health Center; Sylmar Health and Rehabilitation Center, Inc.; and 7th Avenue Center, LLC.”

These existing contract facilities are spread across the state in Santa Cruz County, Merced County, Los Angeles County, Kern County, and Santa Clara County.

The contract with Vista Pacific would be the County’s sixth facility and it is in Riverside County, so SLO County residents who need this level of mental health help will be sent away for treatment, because SLO County doesn’t have such facilities.

“This additional facility is necessary,” Hill said, “to provide appropriate care for new, higher acuity clients, as well as geriatric clients, who have a diagnosis or condition that the currently contracted facilities are not able to adequately treat.

“Additionally, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many residential facilities have reduced capacity for, or even halted, placement of new and even returning clients.”

The County has had several people check into its own Psychiatric Health Facility which has just a handful of beds. “There are several clients who were admitted to the PHF several months ago,” Hill said, “and despite readiness to be transferred to an appropriate residential facility, have remained on the PHF due to lack of beds in other residential facilities. Behavioral Health became aware of Vista Pacifica and discovered they have an excellent reputation, have open beds, and are willing to admit clients from our county.”

The out-of-county facilities are regulated by the State. “The contract providers,” Hill said, “are licensed by the State Department of Health Services as skilled nursing facilities and ‘Institutions for Mental Diseases’ with special treatment programs [and] certified by the Department Health Care Services.”

Costs are charged like a motel room — on a per day basis — and bills are only accrued when SLO County has patients in any of the six facilities.

Hill explained, “The FY 2020-21 Behavioral Health Department approved budget includes \$1,720,426 [of which \$685,793 is funded with General Fund support] for Mental Health Rehabilitative/IMD services, which assumes an average of 20 clients for a total of 7,300 days, at an average rate of \$235.68 per day.

“The currently contracted basic rates for FY 2020-21 vary from \$227 to \$303 per day.

“While Vista Pacifica offers several different levels of care and rates, it is anticipated that the service level and corresponding rate used most often will be The Level “A” Augmented Service Rate at a rate of \$281.91 per client per day as specified in the contract. The average daily rate for currently contracted IMD facilities during FY 2020-21 is \$266.24.”

The Vista Pacific contract is for one year, however, Hill was given the authority to renew the contract for another year without first getting Board approval at the same rate.



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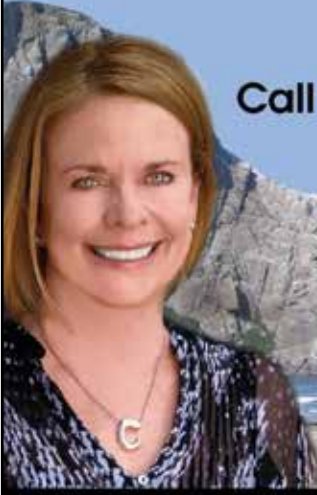
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Los Osos Addresses Homeless Concerns

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Homelessness is on the rise nationally, and Los Osos is hoping to make a difference locally. Via the efforts of the Los Osos Community Advisory Council the Subcommittee on Unhoused Residents was formed to address the issues and create solutions.

“Homelessness is considered a major nation-wide crisis and our cities and towns are living the failures and successes,” said Linde Owen, a sub-committee member and homeless village advocate. “We would like Los Osos to be a success. By inviting the community into the complexity of the solution, we hope to address local homelessness with compassion and action.”

In January LOCAC held the Homelessness: Compassion and Action forum with 18 panelists from county agencies, non-profit organizations and community groups participating and about 80 concerned citizens took part in the virtual meeting.

“This is an issue that is important to our community,” said Sandra Sarrouf- LOCAC 3rd District Representative. “They want to know what is going on, they want their ideas and concerns heard, they want to find solutions, and they want to know how our agencies and community will create solutions.”

This follows the recent County Board of Supervisors funding of up to \$10,000 to pay for the cleanup up of a homeless encampment on county-owned property near the library in an area known as Midtown. An estimated dozen unsheltered community members were relocated in early October of last year.

The subcommittee was formed to create a community dialogue and gather information, meet with local involved agencies and shelters about resources and scenarios, and “hopefully begin to find some path to addressing all of our needs/desires for a safe and healthy place to live,” Owen said. “The encampment behind the library and on Palisades Ave. over the last year and half has many residents concerned over safety, litter, and so many homeless in cars and campers living on the street there. I think everyone could agree that it’s not a solution Lots of people wanted to know how to end it and to know more about what options could help. The homeless forum unraveled the complexity of why people are homeless, it reminded us that there is no us versus them. The extremes between the newly homeless and chronically un-sheltered is vast. Los Osos and other communities have both and everything in-between.”

The public is encouraged to participate in future meetings and can do so via Zoom. Links are posted at www.locac.info.

According to the Homeless Policy Research Institute, homelessness in California increased by more than 22% over the last decade. Between 2018 and 2019, homelessness in California increased by over 16%.

MBHS Teacher Arrested for Sexual Misconduct

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay Police arrested a Morro bay High School teacher on suspicion of having sex with one student and soliciting another girl.

MBPD Cmdr. Amy Watkins said police arrested Tyler Andree, 24, “after a 3-week investigation was conducted into allegations of sexual misconduct by Andree with two MBHS students.”

The case started Jan. 11 when School Resources Ofc. Gene Stuart got an anonymous tip. “The investigation led detectives to identify a possible victim and suspect,” Cmdr. Watkins said. “Detectives located and contacted the believed parties involved which generated a more in-depth investigation into the misconduct by Andree.”

The police and San Luis Coastal Unified School District apparently both were tipped off on the same day. “SLCUSD received information on Monday, Jan. 11,” the District said in a Feb. 8 news release, “informing us of allegations of potential misconduct indicating a teacher/coach had an inappropriate relationship with an unnamed student during his employment. SLCUSD commenced an internal investigation. The Morro Bay Police Department notified the school district that they had received similar information and were starting an investigation.”

Police said their investigation included interviews with the alleged victims and the serving of search warrants. That police legwork identified two alleged victims. They arrested Andree on Feb. 8; but he had already resigned.

“On Monday, Jan. 18,” the District said, “Tyler Andree submitted his resignation effective immediately. Mr. Andree was employed with SLCUSD since Aug. 13, 2019.”

Given that start date, and the fact that all sports have been canceled since March 2020, the swim team, which competes in the spring, hasn’t competed with Andree as coach due to the coronavirus pandemic response and school closures, and the team may not compete in the 2021 season either.

While police have not officially released details of the alleged crimes, The Tribune, on Feb. 11 published a front page article titled, “Student details relationship with accused MBHS teacher.” In the article, the newspaper claims to have exchanged emails with the girl who was allegedly solicited by the teacher. She was not named in the article.

“The teen said she participated in sexually explicit message exchanges with the teacher, after he began expressing romantic interest in her.”

The story said, “They carried on the exchanges for about two months late last year, she said, but their relationship did not become physical.”

Police call such sexually explicit text messages, “sexting.” Sexting is not illegal between consenting adults but as this case indicates, when sexting occurs between an adult and a minor, it’s considered “soliciting of a minor.”

Sexting is also illegal when unwanted by the person on the receiving end, whether the perpetrator is an adult or a minor.

Details about the other victim, who allegedly slept with her teacher, were not discussed by the Tribune’s unnamed source.

The School District said it properly vetted Andree. “San Luis Coastal records reflect that background and reference checks were properly conducted,” the District said. “We have taken steps to ensure student instruction is not disrupted.”

Andree came to MBHS at the start of the 2019-20 school year as a chemistry teacher and girls’ swim team coach. But swimming is a spring sport and in 2020, spring sports were all canceled due to the Coronavirus Pandemic response and schools have been closed in favor of online instruction. While hope springs eternal, whether there will be swimming or any spring sports in 2021 is unknown, as

schools remain closed.

The school newspaper, The Spyglass, had a brief commentary published on its website by the editors Adam Rainbolt and Brayden Appell, who wrote, “These events came as a shock to us who, like many students and staff, were familiar with Andree.

“As our campus comes to terms with Andree’s alleged harmful misdeeds, it is important to keep the victims of his behavior at the forefront of our minds.

“Though news of Andree’s alleged actions may seem surreal to many who knew him, we must remember that they have had very real consequences and that those affected must be treated with empathy and compassion.

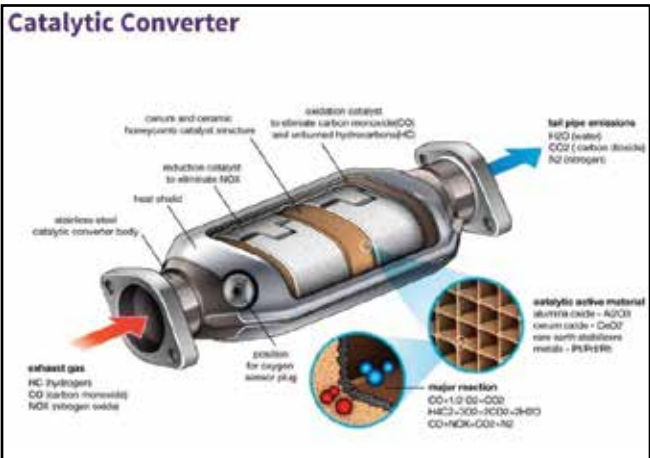
“Morro Bay High School should be a safe space for all students, and these allegations must be addressed in order to realize that goal.”

Police said the investigation is ongoing and anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact SRO Stuart at (805) 772-6225 or Crime Stoppers at (805) 549-STOP.

The District said its priority is protecting students. “Protecting students is paramount,” the District said, “and our teachers are notified each year about appropriate behavior around students. We cannot and will not tolerate inappropriate conduct between a teacher and any student.

“We also work to protect and support the victim(s) and ask that you work with us to respectfully protect student privacy.”

Police Warn of Catalytic Converter Thefts



Morro Bay Police issued a “Community Alert” warning the public about a string of catalytic converter thefts from vehicles in town.

According to the alert, as of Feb. 12, police had taken crime reports for seven thefts of catalytic converters mainly from Toyota Priuses.

Catalytic converters are part of a car’s emissions controls. They re-burn engine exhaust to reduce mostly hydrocarbons before the exhaust goes out the tailpipe. The devices, which are welded or bolted into the exhaust system underneath the vehicle, make cars run cleaner and reduces air pollution. They also contain some valuable metals.

Eventually all that metal gets burned off over time, but with a hybrid like the Prius, the gas engine only runs part time, and so more metals are likely to be recovered.

Police said the thefts are a direct result of an increase in demand for the metals inside the catalytic converters.

“A global trend toward stricter automobile emissions rules and the effects of the pandemic on the mining in South Africa, a major producer of rhodium, has limited the supply causing the price of these precious metals to drastically increase,” police said. Palladium is another metal found in the devices.

Also, the Prius converters are simply bolted on and relatively easy to remove. Indeed, such thieves can steal them in a matter of just a few minutes making it hard to catch them. Welded converters must be cut off with a hacksaw, a

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reciprocating saw, or cut off with a cutting torch.

Police said there are a few things people can do to thwart the sneaky thieves — park your car in the garage (and lock the garage doors); park behind a fence or in a well-lit area if you don't have a garage; and use surveillance cameras to keep an eye on your vehicle.

And of course call 9-1-1 if you see suspicious activity. That's how police figure they will catch the hoodlums.

"When law enforcement sees an increase in crimes such as this," police said in the alert, "we often reach out to our neighboring agencies and share information to aid in the capture or investigations into these crimes."

In Morro Bay police are working with other agencies, as the thefts are being reported in other cities, too. "We are developing important information through our social media outlets and Neighborhood Watch partners to educate the community about these thefts."

According to the Auto Zone website (see: www.auto-zone.com) replacing a catalytic converter varies depending on the make and model of the vehicle.

Auto Zone said to expect to pay at least \$950 to replace a damaged one.

"For some vehicles," Auto Zone reported, "you may be looking at \$2,500 or more to replace a damaged catalytic converter. You should also think about labor costs, which could cost between \$70 and \$130 an hour. The time it takes to finish the job will vary depending on the specific vehicle involved."

Doing the job yourself could drop the costs to \$100-\$200 and on many vehicles it's relatively easy to do, "especially if you buy a direct replacement catalytic converter. The type of converter also plays into cost and of replacement."

Home Invader
Suspect Named

A truck stolen during a home invasion robbery of an elderly woman was found abandoned at a gas station morning in San Jose.

According to Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla, at about 1:50 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 13, deputies responded to the 1700 block of O'Connor Way, which is off Foothill Boulevard just north of the Los Osos Valley Road intersection. O'Connor Way is the back road to Cuesta College and



Johnny Roman Jr.

Home Invader Continued on page 6

News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Clean-Up Week
March 1-5

Los Osos' Annual Clean-Up Week is slated for March 1-5, as Mission Country Disposal offers the special promotion only for residential single-family homes.

According to a company flyer, for no additional charge people can put out up to six, 32-gallon trash cans or the equivalent in plastic garbage bags, boxes or bundles, on their regular pick up day that week.

Cans or bundles can't weigh more than 75 pounds nor be over 4-feet long. Your garbage must be in the regular garbage cans, recycling or green waste haulers and excess garbage left out will be left on the curb, the company flyer explained.

They will haul off boxes with the trash, so if you want to save them, you must place a note on the pile asking the driver not to take it.

They will pick up bulky items, too but you must call them at least a week ahead of time and it won't be free. Limitations are that the items must be on the curb when the 2-man crews come down your street. Among the items they will pick up for a fee are: TVs, heaters, water heaters, couches, washers, dryers, small appliances, chairs, box springs, mattresses, refrigerators, overstuffed chairs, and car tires and rims (limit of four). You must call 805-927-4995 a week ahead of time to arrange pick up of bulky items and to see how much it will cost you. Same day calls will not be accepted, the company said.

The Clean-Up Week is for single-family residences and not apartments, condos, or commercial customers. Spring Clean-Up Week is also March 1-5 in Morro Bay for single-family homes.

LOCSD Meetings

Los Osos Community Service District continues with their monthly Board, Utilities Advisory Committee, Finance Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meetings.

Pursuant to Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, members of the Board of Directors, staff and public may participate in this meeting via teleconference and/or electronically.

Until this order is lifted, all LOCSD meetings are held via Zoom. Information for each meeting and how to get connected is available on the agenda for each meeting which can be found on the LOCSD website losososcsd.org.

Upcoming Meetings:

Finance Advisory Committee Meeting - March 1, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting - March 4, 2021 at 6 p.m. - Streamed live on the Districts facebook page at

facebook.com/losososcsd.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting - March 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Utilities Advisory Committee Meeting - March 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Finance Advisory Committee Meeting - March 29, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

The LOCSD Boardroom will not be open for accessing the meetings until State direction is given and meetings can occur.

Paving Project in SLO



If you commute to SLO, be prepared for construction by attending a virtual community meeting regarding the upcoming Downtown Paving Project. Learn more about the project and get links to the Zoom at www.slocity.org/downtownpavingproject

- February 25 at 6 p.m.
- March 6 at 11 a.m.

Also in SLO, the City Council set major city goals including:

Economic Recovery, Resiliency and Fiscal Sustainability

In collaboration with local partners, continue to support economic recovery for all from the COVID-19 pandemic and support a thriving local economy by supporting local businesses, arts and culture, downtown vitality, practicing fiscal responsibility, paying down unfunded pension liabilities, and investing in critical infrastructure.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

In response to a commitment to making San Luis Obispo a more welcoming and inclusive city for all, continue to develop programs and policies to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and advance the recommendations of the DEI task force.

Housing and Homelessness

Facilitate the production of housing, including the necessary supporting infrastructure, with an emphasis on affordable and workforce housing. Collaborate with local non-profit partners, and the county, the state and federal government to discover and implement comprehensive and effective strategies to reduce chronic homelessness.

Climate Action, Open Space and Sustainable Transportation

Continue to update and implement the Climate

Action Plan for carbon neutrality, including preservation and enhancement of open space and urban forest, alternative and sustainable transportation, and planning and implementation for resilience.

"The major city goals provide a focus for what we, as a community, should strive to achieve over the next two years," said City Manager Derek Johnson. "Staff will take the Council's direction to put together a budget that focuses on delivering essential services and critical infrastructure projects, while prioritizing these Major City Goals."

French and Marion
Recognized

French Hospital Medical Center and Marian Regional Medical Center were recognized by Blue Shield of California with a Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) for Maternity Care designation, as part of the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program. This distinction falls on the heels of recognition as Best Maternity Hospitals by Newsweek for both French and Marian's birthing centers.

To help address these gaps in care and to help ensure the better health of mothers, The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association enhanced its quality evaluation for the Maternity Care program to address key factors driving the United States' maternal health crisis such as preventable or treatable pregnancy-related conditions, high utilization of Caesarean sections, and racial and ethnic disparities in maternal healthcare. In 2018, facilities that received designations under the Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care program cared for more than 40% of Blue Cross and Blue Shield commercially insured women giving birth across the country.

French Hospital Medical Center and Marian Regional Medical Care were recognized by Blue Shield of California for meeting the quality selection criteria for maternity care.

In 2020, the Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care Program was expanded beyond traditional outcome measures to include assessments of internal quality improvement, data collection and dissemination, and internal protocols that better address clinical quality and equity issues in maternity care. New in the evaluation cycle, facilities must collect race ethnicity data, have a maternal quality improvement program, commence drills and simulations for adverse events, and have dedicated protocols and procedures for the management of hypertension and hemorrhage. In addition, they must meet clinical outcome metrics at a higher standard than required previously. Facilities eligible for the Blue Distinction Centers for maternity care show statistically significant differences in key clinical outcomes compared to their peers.

Send your news, community and business briefs to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com. Be sure to include the who, what, why, where and when information along with a contact person.



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Home Invader From page 5

Camp San Luis.

The robbery had actually occurred earlier that morning. “The victim told detectives the suspect took cash from inside the residence and then stole the victim’s truck,” Cipolla said. The truck is a gold 2006 Chevy Silverado with the license plate number of 8Z85747. Deputies put out an alert on the vehicle and released a photo of the truck.

The suspect was described as a white male adult in his 60s, approximately 6-feet tall or possibly taller, with a heavy build and gray hair. And by the next day, they’d identified a suspect.

“Through the course of the investigation,” Cipolla said, “Sheriff’s forensic specialists and investigators with the Major Crimes Unit identified 38-year-old Johnny Jesse Roman, Jr., of San Luis Obispo as the suspect in this case.”

“Roman,” Cipolla added, “is believed to have entered the home of an elderly female and stole cash from the residence and then stole the victim’s truck.” Roman’s previous jail mug shot was also released to the public.

An arrest warrant has been issued for Roman and the Sheriff’s Department said if you see this vehicle or the suspect “do not attempt to make contact and immediately call 9-1-1.”

Alleged Drug Dealer Busted in Atascadero

By Neil Farrell



An Atascadero man was arrested on suspicion of possessing illegal drugs for sale. Among his stash were heroin (in the small tied-off baggies shown here); two black pouches with Xanax pills; a small Ziplock baggie with fentanyl; and methamphetamine. Photos courtesy SLO County Sheriff’s Department

The Sheriff’s Office and Atascadero Police arrested a North County man on several counts of suspicion of possession of a controlled substance for sale and a committing a felony while out on bail.

Sheriff’s spokesman Tony Cipolla said in a news release that at about 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 4, the Sheriff’s Narcotics Unit was told that a vehicle associated “with a known drug dealer,” was parked at a hotel in the 6800 block of El Camino Real in Atascadero.

“The suspect exited that hotel where he had been staying,” Cipolla said, “drove off and was subsequently stopped by Atascadero Police Officers for a driving infraction.”

The suspect, identified as Christopher Rafael Burrell, 45 of Atascadero, was out on bail for a prior arrest, which meant he was subject to search and seizure, according to Cipolla. A search of Burrell’s car and the motel room reportedly unearthed a cache of illegal drugs and ill-gotten money.

“A search of Burrell’s hotel room,” Cipolla said, “resulted in the discovery of 220 grams of methamphetamine [worth an estimated \$1,500]; 35 grams of fentanyl [\$4,200]; 11 grams of heroin [\$375] and more than 1,000 Xanax pills [\$4,000] that were packaged for sale. In addition, more than \$1,000 in cash was recovered from his vehicle.”

Burrell was booked for three counts of suspicion of possession of a controlled substance for sale and a committing a felony while out on bail.

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Rat Creek Slide Assessment Continues



Excavators clear debris and mud at Rat Creek on Feb. 11. Photo courtesy Caltrans

Caltrans continues to assess the washout at Rat Creek on Hwy 1 in Monterey County, as crews clear debris from storm drains and culverts north and south of the massive landslide.

The highway washed out during the big 3-day storm Jan. 27-29, when 10-12 inches of rain fell onto the burn scar of 2020’s Dolan Fire. Rat Creek, at mile marker 30 just south of the Big Creek Bridge, came down in that storm washing out a 150-foot section of roadway and the cliff that held it up.

“Crews continue working at Rat Creek seven days a week as part of the ongoing assessment phase,” Caltrans spokesman Kevin Drabinski said in a news release. “Geotechnical and engineering crews continue to gather data and inspect areas in proximity of the washout and the surrounding canyon. To date, no design alternative has been selected. Given the complexity of the repair there is at present no timeline for when this decision will be made.”

Crews have been clearing more than 60 locations along the highway where debris came down in the storm.

“Work continues unplugging numerous culverts both north and south of Rat Creek, which were overwhelmed by debris flow from the recent rainstorm,” according to Caltrans. “Significantly, all the culverts have been located and their inlets exposed. Additional debris removal from the inlet areas and removal of mud and debris from inside the pipes continues.”

Caltrans’ maintenance crews are working in the open sections of the highway. “Crews continue to work in support of emergency contractors inside the closed sections of highway with guardrail repairs and restoring drainage facilities.”

The highway remains closed at areas north and south of Rat Creek. The southern closure (from the SLO County side) is just north of Pacific Valley, at mile marker 16. That should change soon.

“Given current progress on debris removal and road repairs,” Caltrans said on Feb. 12, “it is anticipated that this southern closure will move north on Monday, Feb. 22, and

relocate to the Big Creek Vista Point [at PM 27.3], where a turnaround is being constructed.”

In an update Feb. 18, Caltrans said the move north of Big Creek would be done by Friday, Feb. 19. “This will open up an additional 11 miles of the highway on the south side of Rat Creek,” Caltrans said.

From the Monterey County side, Caltrans has installed a turnaround just north of the Lime Creek Bridge at PM 32.1. That turnaround will mark the end of the line on Hwy 1 from the north heading south.

“In upcoming weeks,” Caltrans said, “the turnaround will be improved with permanent surfacing and enhanced striping. Work to restore impacted drainage systems on Highway 1 north of Lime Creek will continue using standard traffic control as necessary.”

Essentially, only residents will be allowed past the roadblocks to access their homes.

Cuesta Accreditation Reaffirmed for 7 Years



Cuesta College passed accreditation reviews and continues to adhere to common standards of excellence or goals in education. A school’s accreditation affects whether students can get Federal and state financial aid. It also ensures that credits will be accepted by another college if a student should transfer between schools.

“The reaffirmation of accreditation provides assurance to our students and community of the quality education and commitment to institutional effectiveness at Cuesta College,” said Dr. Jill Stearns, superintendent / president. “I am proud to have this external validation of our institution and appreciate the faculty, classified professionals, and campus leaders that make Cuesta College a place where students thrive.”

The accreditation was reaffirmed by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The ACCJC is an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. Member Institutions participate in a self-evaluation and peer review on a regular cycle to provide assurance of quality education, promote effectiveness and continuous quality improvement,

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News

and maintain the quality of higher education in California and the United States.

Cuesta College’s previous ACCJC team visit occurred in Fall 2014, in which members visited classrooms, examined processes, and investigated college operations. As a result of that visit, Cuesta’s accreditation was reaffirmed through 2020.

Last fall semester, Cuesta College hosted a team of 11 faculty and administrators from peer colleges for a virtual accreditation site visit from Sept. 28 through Oct. 1. The visit was based around the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), which provides evidence of the College’s effectiveness, quality of education, and continuous quality improvement.

At its meeting in January, the ACCJC reviewed the ISER and evidence submitted by Cuesta College and the Peer Review Team Report prepared by the visiting team. Upon reviewing and considering these materials, the Commission acted to reaffirm Cuesta College’s accreditation for seven years.

“This is great news for our College, and I want to thank everyone at Cuesta for their hard work and dedication,” said Dr. Jason Curtis, Vice President of Instruction and Accreditation Liaison Officer. “We had great stories to tell and ample evidence to share of how we meet the ACCJC Standards.”

While the team report indicates some areas in which Cuesta could continue to improve, it provides no formal recommendations around compliance or institutional effectiveness. The report also commended Cuesta College for its commitment to increasing success for all students with the full implementation of Guided Pathways and AB 705, two statewide initiatives which “require significant changes to how California Community Colleges have served students, not only in terms of how the College onboard students, but also how effectively they help them progress through their academic programs.”

The next report from Cuesta College will be the mid-term report due on October 15, 2024 and the next comprehensive review will occur in Fall 2027. Please visit Cuesta College’s accreditation webpage for more information on accreditation.



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Community

Moving Forward in 2021: Maritime Museum Feature Legacy Commercial Fishermen Interviews

By Judy Salamacha



Master Modeler Ken Foran Measuring Harold Biaggini’ Dirty Dozen before Demo. Finished 3-D model on display at MBMM.

Author Note: I am over-the-moon excited about the Morro Bay Maritime Museum’s (MBMM) current oral history project. I served on the board of directors during its site development and heard the group had funded over 20 hours of interviews with working commercial industry representatives. In 2001-2002 AGP Video did the camera work for interviews conducted by Steve Rebuck, a commercial fisheries consultant, and Dr. Monica Hunter, a Cultural Anthropologist. It was a dream of our board to have these videos available for the public to understand the fisherman’s perspective of life on the waterfront and out to sea. I previewed those soon to be live at www.morrobaymaritime.org and on YouTube. The hour you will spend with each person is even more enlightening than I anticipated. Many thanks for the collaboration efforts of MBMM, AGP Video, and Rock Harbor Marketing for preserving and sharing these once “buried treasures.”

Scott Mather is MBMM’s President of the Board of Directors. He and wife Lori have increased the audio-visual experiences at the museum. He said, “We are so indebted to the early founders of our association for coordinating this first person account of the industry that is our community’s legacy. We also have stories on the website by those who worked and served aboard our fleet. We intend this oral history education project for students and journalists to do their research and for residents and tourists to enjoy stories from our maritime past. It will also be a living memory for families and friends of those interviewed to see and hear individuals no longer with us.”

Born in Cayucos December 5, 1923, Harold Biagini tells the story that his Swiss-Italian grandfather sailed around the horn to Monterey and author Robert Louis Stevenson gave him twenty-five cents to survive. The Cayucos dairy family grew to seven ranches. Harold recalls riding five miles on horseback to school every other day. Other days they wagoned cream to market. “Abalone covered the rocks and we’d fish-fry on the beach.” On display is a replica of Harold’s dive boat produced by master modeler Ken Foran. Many of us enjoyed a glimpse of one of Morro Bay’s favorite citizens, Ed Biagini.

Frank Brebes, an abalone diver, would free dive as would most of the divers interviewed. Hard-hat diving was risky because one had to depend on an active crew on-board not cutting one’s air hose. He opines the days when he felt Fish and Game wardens were more of an ally for the fisherman.

Tour Avila Pier during Barry Cohen’s interview. He believes he was the area’s first commercial diver for sea urchins, a hot market for Japanese eateries in Los Angeles. Mr. Cohen candidly discusses the impact of quota regulations on the industry.

Marco Collini fished albacore. His Dad immigrated from Italy to San Diego to Alaska on the Star of India, which now is a major exhibit at the San Diego Maritime Museum. At 14 Collini was in the Galapagos Islands diving for live bait caught in the nets. At 17 he fished for swordfish in Alaska. During WWII he was asked if he wanted to

be a Navy diver. After a fifteen minute dive, they said he was trained.

Tour a 2001 fish processing operation at the Old Port Fish Market on Avila Pier after Travis Evans’ interview. His teacher at Visalia High School recommended he study Animal Husbandry at Cal Poly. In 1939 he could afford the all boys’ school by working and sleeping in the dairy barn. He discusses his concerns for the future of Central Coast fisheries with pending regulations.

Joe Giannini’s animated interview brought him from Newport, OR to Morro Bay in 1946. Fishing was in its heyday and the fishermen convinced him to build Marine Service & Equipment on Market Street. There were 365 fishing boats out of Morro Bay that needed servicing. He recalls he sold out of 5-inch televisions one year since the fisherman wanted to watch the World Series at sea. Sit down with Jody Giannini, too, who took over the business.

A past president of the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen’s Organization (MBCFO), Wayne and Diane Moody fished together for 23 years. He worked at Diablo and participated in competition sport diving for urchins and abalone. The couple discusses building and working their commercial fishing boat.

Jeremiah and Trudy O’Brien talked about fishing together, diving for urchins and gill net fishing until Jeremiah took on extra duties as the MBCFO’s spokesperson and negotiator during years of difficult times as regulations impacted the industry.

Born in 1918 Gerard Parsons is a sixth generation San Luis Obispo descendant of Jose Francisco Ortega, guide to San Diego founder Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra. Parsons was a founding father of the San Luis Obispo Yacht Club and active in the development of Port San Luis.

“...those guys were crazy” was often said about fishing partners Dean Tyler and Ernie Porter. Their interview comes with a tour of the Morro Bay Aquarium during its heyday complete with barking seals. The fishing duo had tales to tell about diving, learning to use new scuba equipment and their selvedge adventures.

Lawrence Thomas’ original plan was a shell stand to keep young son Dave busy while keeping his eyes peeled for a Hwy. 1 property to open a shell shop and entice tourists to visit Morro Bay. He talks about his property struggles over the three lots he had title for as the Tidelands harbor district was in development. He only maintained the corner Embarcadero property for a successful Shell Shop business. But before opening it he was a fisherman and tells a gripping survival story when he and the Mrs. took their newly owned small craft to Alaska to salmon fish. A major storm outside of Coos Bay almost ended more than their adventure. Once Dave took over management of the Shell Shop, Lawrence enjoyed his travels looking for rare shells.

Wilmer Tognazzini knew he wanted to be a teacher when he was eight years old. In 1935 he was principal of Morro Bay Elementary School with six classrooms. He built eight more. His students were mainly fishermen families. “No one has more integrity than a fisherman,” he maintained. He was always teaching -- wandering from

Maritime Continued on page 8

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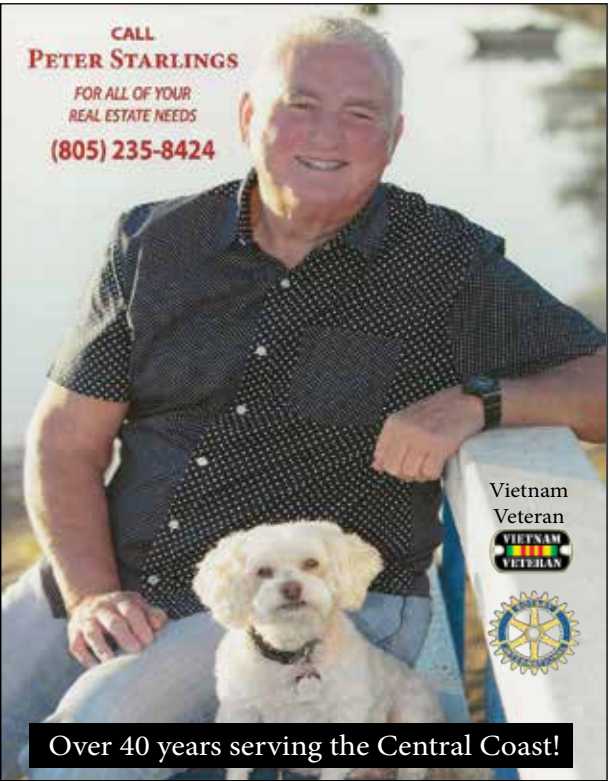
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Police Blotter



Morro Bay Police Logs

- **Feb. 7:** Police were faxed a ransom note and some sort of image and no doubt a task force will be formed.
- **Feb. 7:** Police are investigating a vandalism likely committed by some misbegotten knave at Berwick and Norwich.
- **Feb. 7:** Police were called at 7 p.m. to Albertson’s to deal with someone who they said was trespassing. Police referred the mamaluke to the District Attorney.
- **Feb. 7:** Police documented a vandalism at Morro Bay High School, committed even with the little hooligans gone.
- **Feb. 7:** Police responded at 11:22 a.m. to the 200 block of Atascadero Rd., for a domestic dispute. Logs indicated one person was taken to County Mental Health for a 72-hour timeout after apparently going a little wooley-booger.
- **Feb. 7:** A citizen at a storage facility in the 300 block of Quintana said the locks had been broken on their unit. No word on whether anything inside was worth stealing.
- **Feb. 7:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:16 a.m. at Quintana and South Bay. A 17-year-old driver was nicked for suspicion of drunk driving which is bone to the marrow stupid. The rascal was turned over to his or her proud parents down at the police station.
- **Feb. 6:** Police contacted a regular customer at 8:19 p.m. at Rite Aid. The scofflaw, 46, had three bench warrants, so naturally police cited and released him again.
- **Feb. 6:** Police were called at 7:22 p.m. to the 500 block of Morro Ave, where a woman said someone stole her car from where she parked it in front of the Comfort Inn. Police found her car, at 8:05 p.m., unharmed and parked in front of the Blue Sail Inn on Market Ave., no doubt restoring a modicum of comfort to wrong-way Nellie.
- **Feb. 6:** Police caught up to another model citizen at 3 a.m. at Beach and Embarcadero. The 35-year-old man had a pair of warrants. Police dealt him another citation and released the apparent night owl.
- **Feb. 5:** Police were called at 10:25 p.m. to 777 Cuesta Ave., for a report of shots fired at an inhabited dwelling. An Arizona man was arrested the following day in Atascadero for the insurrection.
- **Feb. 5:** Police responded at 9:13 p.m. to the 700 block of Main to investigate a deadly matter of an assault with a deadly weapon.
- **Feb. 5:** Police responded at 12:21 p.m. to an accident at Yerba Buena and Hwy 1. Logs indicated the drivers ex-

- changed insurance information and no doubt a few choice words as well.
- **Feb. 5:** Someone found something somewhere in town and gave it to some cop, as logs were not very specific.
 - **Feb. 4:** Police responded at 7:10 p.m. to the 2800 block of Hemlock where someone stole a deed of trust and construction paperwork, as once again people will steal anything.
 - **Feb. 4:** Police responded at 6:30 p.m. to Lila Keiser Park for a reported domestic violence. The matter was referred to the D.A. for possible inaction.
 - **Feb. 4:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 1 p.m. on Clarabelle Dr. Logs indicated a 34-year-old fellow was arrested for suspicion of driving schwacked on meth.
 - **Feb. 4:** Police responded at 7:35 a.m. to the 1100 block of Allesandro where they recovered a clear baggie with a “white crystal-like substance.” Police tested it and of course it was meth. No word on who lost his stash but police will destroy the white death.
 - **Feb. 4:** Police responded at 12:45 a.m. to a minor traffic accident on Hwy 1 at Main Street.
 - **Feb. 3:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:45 p.m. at Main and San Jacinto. The driver, 22, was cited and released for allegedly driving on a toot.
 - **Feb. 3:** Police responded to the 2100 block of Seaview at 7:22 a.m. A man said some scalawag stole the tools out of his unlocked utility truck.
 - **Feb. 2:** Police responded at 8:54 p.m. to a business in the 800 block of Morro Bay Blvd., for a disturbance. A 65-year-old woman was cited for suspicion of trespassing and “obstructing and investigation.”
 - **Feb. 2:** At 6:40 p.m. police took a report of a missing person in the 300 block of Arbutus. Logs indicated the wanderer was located apparently safe if not entirely sound.
 - **Feb. 2:** Someone found a cell phone laying on the sidewalk at the Sequoia Bayview condos in the 300 block of Sequoia St., and gave it to police.
 - **Feb. 2:** Police responded at 2 p.m. to the 400 block of Elena where a woman told police some scamboogah stole her purse out of her car. Logs indicated she called later to say she’d found her purse inside her apartment; now if she could only find her sunglasses...
 - **Feb. 2:** Police were sent at 10:12 a.m. to the 900 block of Las Tunas to assist the fire department with a 71-year-old fellow who sadly left Paradise for Heaven.
 - **Feb. 2:** Police contacted a prison parolee, 28, at 10 a.m. in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd., and arrested him of suspicion of child endangerment. They also placed a parole hold on him at County Jail — next stop Sing Sing.
 - **Feb. 1:** Some feculent, thievin’ bilge rats were apparently roaming around stealing from vehicles. A citizen in the 500 block of Embarcadero had tools and modular boxes taken; and tools were stolen from a locked vehicle in the 400 block of Shasta, as the crime wave continues.

Community

Maritime From page 7

table to table at his son, Mark’s Tognazzini’s Dockside Restaurant talking about the lifestyle of fish the diner’s were eating. At the time of the interviews he had published fifteen books on local history from the columns he wrote for the local newspaper.

Two separate interviews were completed with Eddie and Dick Sylvester who were born and grew up in San Luis Obispo. Both worked the family tugboats for the oil industry out of Avila. Dick branched out to fishing, but stayed home the year he was married then for survival income went back to sea. He told the wife she wasn’t going to see much of him and explained to the Steve and Monica if a fisherman didn’t have an understanding wife the marriage was destined to fail.

Travis Ford wrapped it up as the project goes live, “The Maritime Museum team are remarkable stewards of Morro Bay’s maritime history. The names represented in these videos are true legacies to the very origins our city was founded on. We consider it a privilege to help them bring these interviews into the modern age of content viewing and hope that residents, visitors, and the families of those interviewed will be able to enjoy them for years to come.”

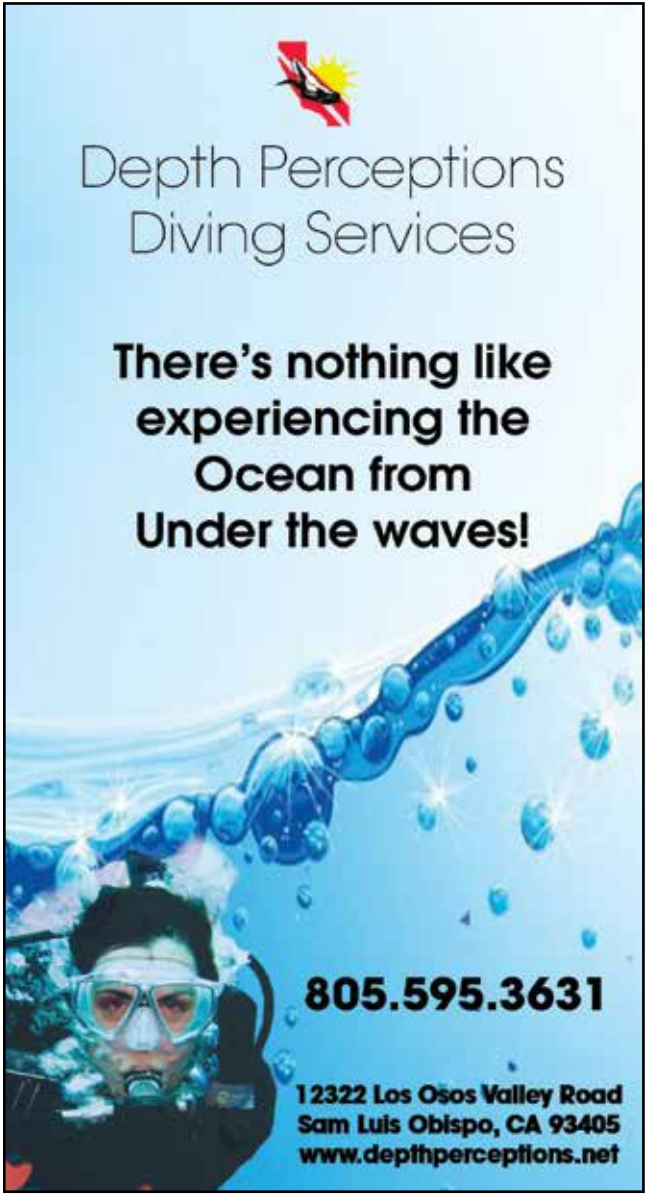
Cambria Businesses Reflect on a Not-So-Bad Year

By Jill Turnbow



Moonstone Cellars, 812 Cornwall St, Cambria, got creative when the pandemic hit and will continue with the table service tastings.

This past year with its lockdowns, changing tiers, and closures, many businesses have suffered. Some have permanently shuttered or struggled to keep the doors open. But for others, the year brought some surprising twists and unexpected boosts.



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Bull’s Eye From page 1

be no loser.”

In the end Matt did defeat his mom, but lost to his brother. Soon after the couple began work on getting the trailer built via local craftsman and started practicing with the five children that help make up their blended family.

If you have never thrown an axe before don’t worry, they coach participants and conduct mini games and elimination tournaments.

“You have to try new things in life and get out of your comfort zone,” said Jen, a Hospice nurse.

Because times are what they are, COVID-19 safety measures are in effect. Masks are required and equipment is wiped down. The trailer holds two throwers at a time and friends and family can watch and cheer or heckle from outside.

“We follow all the CDC guidance guidelines,” Matt said. “One of the one of the wonderful things about this business model is we’re coming to your safe place. We can come to your house and provide a really unique experience for you and your family that you don’t want to expose elsewhere. In between throwers we’re wiping down the axes and anything that someone might touch. Ultimately, you’re forced to be outside with it, so everyone’s able to practice social distancing in fresh air.”

The company is ready to do popup events at other businesses such as wineries and, hopefully soon, festivals and music events that they will announce on social media. They also offer a nighttime Glow Throw and plans are in the works to start a league of throwers.

“We don’t compete with a lot of businesses,” Matt said. “If anything we add value and attract people to come watch and participate.

Down the road, post COVID, Jen and Matt plan to open a non-mobile location as well.

“I’m so thankful to have Jen as my partner,” Matt said. “We just want people to be inspired to take risk and go for it. I mean even during a pandemic there are opportunities. You can’t just focus on the negatives and the fear — you got to really focus on the people around you. There is so much



Matt and Jenn Corning, owners of SLO Axe Co.. Photo by Dean Sullivan

potential in the country we live in which is the greatest country on Earth.”

Looking to score a direct hit? Follow them on Facebook and Instagram under SLO Axe Co or check out their website sloaxeco.com.

After being coached, this writer did throw an axe and made a bull’s-eye on the second attempt, so the challenge is on.

Community

Todd Clift, owner and winemaker at Moonstone Cellars reflected on some advice he was given prior to the pandemic. “A consultant suggested table service for tastings. I thought it would be way too much trouble. But once we were forced to do it, outside, turns out he might have been right.”

Todd went on to say, “Our guests really enjoy it, our staff is happier, and we are selling more wine.” However, these benefits did come at a cost. Todd says “I had to invest quite a bit in creating the patio space, purchasing reserva-



The French Corner Bakery, 2214 Main St, Cambria, continues to have a loyal customer base during COVID-19 times.

tion software, fire tables and heaters, hiring new staff. But it was worth it,” says Clift. “When the pandemic is over, we will continue to serve our guests this way. I’m pretty happy about it.”

Across town in the East Village, Miguel Viveros, owner of the French Bakery, says “I’m surprised every month when I look at the books. Both the bakery and our sister business, Sandi’s Deli, are doing well.” Viveros explains that both shops were always predominantly “to-go” businesses so they were well suited to continue during the pandemic. He says “In the beginning I was so worried about my employees. But our customers kept coming. Sandi’s did even better than the bakery. I’m really happy I can keep my employees working.”

On the other end of town, Vicki and Gary Neal, owners of the West End Bar & Grill, have seen business pick up in the last several months. “The first couple of months of the lockdown were rough,” Gary said. “We only took over this restaurant in March of 2019, and there was a lot we had to do to turn it around and then the pandemic hit. But 2020 was actually better than 2019.”

Gary explained that the first thing they did was get involved with the Lion’s Club, as well as other Cambria restaurants, to provide meals for struggling families. In the early months of the lockdown they were feeding 100 families a week. They started promoting heavily on social media and began take-out and delivery service. They continue to provide deliveries Thursday through Sunday, but now they can focus on the new outdoor dining area.

Gary gives most of the credit to his wife, Vicki, who has 38 years of service experience. “She is passionate about providing good service to our customers.”

Vicki gets excited when talking about the new outdoor dining space. “It’s really beautiful, and comfortable. It has been a blessing. We’ve added heaters and flowers, we love it. Our customers really enjoy it. I guess if I had to think of a downside, it would be all the propane tanks we have to keep filling!”

City Needs Advisors

The City of Morro Bay has reopened applications for several seats on its advisory boards and readers interested in taking an active role in the community are urged to step up to the plate.

The City is advertising for three open seats on the Public Works Advisory Board or PWAB; three seats on the Harbor Advisory Board; and two on the Tourism Business Improvement District or TBID.

The Harbor positions are for one marine oriented business representative and two alternates from the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen’s Organization’s ranks.

The Harbor Board advises the City Council on the Harbor Department’s issues — policies, development projects, planning and operations.

TBID is seeking a member at large who is also a hotelier and a hotelier from a property with 50 or less rooms.

TBID deals with an assessment district that includes motels, hotels, B&Bs, and vacation rentals and consists of a 3% charge added onto the cost of a night’s stay.

For the past few years, TBID had been advisory to the City Tourism Department, but that structure fell apart when the Coronavirus Pandemic response kicked in last March and tourism promotions were curtailed and tourism was actually discouraged by the City.

The TBID and the City are now working on an arrangement to turn control of the assessment monies and promotions over to TBID, with some City oversight of the budget.

The deadline for applying is 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26. Completed applications can be emailed, mailed or returned at the drop box located at City Hall.

For applications and more information, see: www.morrobayca.gov/268/Boards-Committees-Commissions.

New Thrift Store in Morro Bay

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay has a new thrift shop after a Los Osos business relocated to a spot on Quintana Road.

The Nifty Thrifty Thrift Shop opened a couple of weeks ago in the Quintana Plaza, 365 Quintana Rd., taking a pair of retail spaces in the commercial center where the ASAP Reprographics printing and stationery store is located.

Bonnie Roe, whose boyfriend Anthony Orozco owns the store, said they purchased it when it was in Los Osos in the Grocery Outlet shopping Center in a row of stores



Preeya Wiseman, left, and Bonnie Roe pose for a photograph in the Nifty Thrifty Thrift Store’s boutique. Photo by Neil Farrell

behind Carlock’s Bakery.

They bought it from Preeya Wiseman, who started the store. She continues to work at the store, Roe said. But that won’t last forever.

Wiseman said she and her husband plan to move out of state probably in a year-and-a-half. Her husband owns First Defense Firearms, a gun store in Los Osos.

“It’s worked out for both of us,” Roe said. “This has given me an opportunity now that I’m in remission, for going back into the workforce.”

Roe explained that she underwent surgery in 2018 to remove brain cancer.

She explained that the store’s two sides have different merchandise. One side has clothing and is arranged like a “boutique,” and the other side looks like a typical thrift store with a variety of items — furniture, household goods, small appliances, home décor, and children’s toys, among other stuff.

All their merchandise has been donated, she said. The store will be working with community organizations like the Community Resource Center in Morro Bay and the 17 Strong Cancer Fund. The 17 Strong organization is dear to her heart.

That group was founded in memory of baseball player Ryan Teixeira, who died very young of cancer, and raises money to fulfill the wishes of cancer survivors, similar to the way the Make-A-Wish Foundation grants wishes to children.

“Make-A-Wish stops at 18,” Roe said, “they [17 Strong] take it up from there. They are for people 18 to 40; it’s a foundation that helps adults.”

Once the Coronavirus Pandemic is finally over, they are scheduled for getting her wish granted. “We’re supposed to go to Paris,” Roe said, “whenever COVID is over.”

The Nifty Thrifty Thrift Store is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Natural World
The Harbor Seals of Morro Bay

By Ruth Ann Angus



Harbor seals hauled out and resting on the mudflats in Morro Bay Photos by Ruth Ann Angus

You're slipping silently through the waters of the back bay in your kayak, and suddenly the surface of the water breaks, a small rounded head appears. Two large dark eyes peer at you intently. Nostrils resting right at the water line flare open and shut and with a whoosh, the head disappears into the depths. You've had your first encounter with a harbor seal.

Morro Bay is home to anywhere from 20 to 40 harbor seals. These marine mammals live in colonies that tend to stay in familiar locations and although some may stray afar for awhile, they usually return to their home territory.

Spotted, mottled, dark and light, these little guys come in a variety of decors. Some are light gray with black spots, some brown with gray spots, while others are all-over brownish-black or silver-gray.

Sometimes the location they live in contributes to their

coloring as it does in the San Francisco Bay area where many of the harbor seals have a red coloration that comes from a coating of iron oxide that gets deposited on the hair. They are referred to as "red coats" and up to 40% of the seals in the Bay area have this coloring.

A harbor seal's diet reflects whatever seasonal or regional prey is available. They like to dine on a variety of fishes, mollusks, crustaceans, and cephalopods. Generally they feed close to shore and it is believed that they develop preferred feeding sites. These seals can stay submerged for up to 20 minutes.

Pupping season ranges from late March to mid-May from San Francisco down through the central coast. Mating takes place in the water but births can occur either on land or in shallow water. Pups can swim almost immediately after birth. Newborns are generally seen in Morro Bay

beginning in March and into April.

The pup (usually only one) is a bluish-gray with white below and sticks close to its mother, nursing for about a month.

When pups are a bit older they join together to play, frolic in the shallow water, and slide down the mud banks of haul out sites.

North of Morro Bay at the Elkhorn Slough a large colony of approximately 100 animals uses a haul out area on the mudflats that is relatively protected. Signs have been erected to warn boaters and hikers not to approach too closely.

These hauling out sites are important to the seals that use the areas as prime resting spots and to give birth and nurse their young.

Haul out sites are so important that they are generally chosen based on such things as easy access to the water, low human disturbance, and proximity to good feeding areas. Disturbance by human activity can lead to an abandonment of a haul out site.

In spite of their sensitivity to disturbance, the seals enjoy playing hide and seek with humans. You will find that as you are observing them, they will be watching you too!

While boating near harbor seals in the bay it is possible to get to within 100 feet of the animals before they will dive under water, resurfacing some feet away to stare at you.

Harbor seals are marine mammals and as such are fully protected from harassment by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. Fines are stiff so take heed.

It is advisable that while kayaking or canoeing in the back bay you give a wide berth to harbor seals that may be hauled out on mudflats or the banks of the mouth of Chorro Creek. But don't be surprised if one or two of them suddenly pop up from the depths right next to your boat.

There are several locations locally where you can observe harbor seals. Along with the already mentioned colony in Morro Bay, another colony regularly hauls out on the offshore rocks at Corallina Cove in Montana de Oro. The rocks below the cliffs at Shell Beach near Palisade Avenue and Ocean Boulevard are also a popular spot for the seals. On the north coast you can spot them lounging on the rocks south of San Simeon State Park.

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Poly Construction Capture Historical Win at Regional Competition

Cal Poly's winning Commercial Team members get together via Zoom after the ASC Competition that was virtual this year for the first time. The team members (to, from left) are Evan Tookey, Shaina Suanico and Lizette Galvez. On the bottom (from left) are Sophie Stewart, Skylar Schrank and Josh De Mattel.

Cal Poly students brought home 11 trophies from this year's annual Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) Region 6 and 7 Student Competition, breaking their record set just last year when they won 10 awards, including six first-place trophies.

This year 11 of Cal Poly's 14 teams finished in the top three spots, including 10 trophies won by construction management (CM) students and one trophy by civil engineering students. Four Cal Poly teams placed first, including three Construction Management Department teams — Project Management, Electrical and Mixed-Use teams — and the Virtual Design and Construction Team from the Civil Engineering Department.

The university earned nearly three times the number of trophies than its closest competitor, Idaho's Boise State. The annual competition attracted nearly 1,100 students competing on 152 teams from 18 states representing 47 universities, including Brigham Young, UC Los Angeles, UC Berkeley, Stanford, the University of Southern California and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

In addition to the four top-place finishes, Cal Poly's Commercial, Design Build, Integrated Project, Sustainable Building, Preconstruction and Concrete Solutions teams took second place. A second Cal Poly Virtual Design and Construction team placed third.

Cal Poly teams were made up of nearly an equal number of women and men.

Senior Dara Lin, who is majoring in construction management and architecture, participated with the Integrated Project Design team, which earned a second place in the graduate division. The team included all new members.

"Our hard work paid off," said Lin, of Boston. "Although we hadn't participated in the ASC competition

before and the format was all virtual, we were able to collaborate effectively, and I'm proud of what the team was able to achieve."

Construction Management Department Head Jeong Woo added: "Our teams' outstanding results tell a great deal about student quality, faculty dedication and the excellence of Learn by Doing."

The 2021 event marked the ASC's 34th annual competition, held virtually Feb. 3-6. Cal Poly construction management students have been participating in the competition since its inception.

The student teams spend months preparing for the competition, working under the guidance of faculty coaches and team sponsors, many of whom are Cal Poly alumni. Because it was held virtually this year, students had to prepare quite differently. For the first time in the competition's history, students were not allowed access to labs and rooms for practice runs.

"We prepared, practiced and expected the unexpected," said Electric Team member Amanda Schrader of Huntington Beach. "Ultimately it came down to our team collaboration, determination and work ethic. It was an incredible opportunity for all of us. Our biggest takeaway is that team moral and dedication will always be a strong suit in the industry."

Twelve individual team sponsors mentored them and helped pay for team shirts, new computers and other supplies. Cupertino Electric and Nibbi Brothers provided virtual collaboration tools for all the teams

"The sponsorships were instrumental in helping us shift to a virtual work environment. Our students could not do this without the continued financial support and mentoring of our generous sponsors," Woo said. "Our

11

Obituaries

Ken Casida
1943 - 2021



After a brief illness, it was time for Morro Bay’s Ken Casida to leave his loving blended family to be with his Lord.

Ken and his twin sister Kay were born to Jeanette and Delmer Casida in Coffeyville, Kansas. With a lifelong love of aeronautics, Ken joined the Civil Air Patrol and Naval Reserve before he graduated from high school. In 1965 his college was interrupted when he was shipped out to serve in Vietnam on the USS Galveston.

Once home he elected to attend the California College of Mortuary Science in Los Angeles and was hired by Forest Lawn, Cypress, CA. He served as a director for five years. Married to Caroline, they moved to Visalia, CA in 1973 to accept a career position with Hadley Chapel.

Always a believer in community leadership, Ken was a founding member of the Visalia Breakfast Rotary Club and President in 1992-93. He was active in the First Presbyterian Church and board member for Visalia Hospice and Meadow Lakes Club, Inc. Ken and Caroline frequented Vahalla Restaurant owned by Elsie Hurst and after Caroline’s passing in 2008 Ken and Elsie deepened their friendship then married February 20, 2010. They moved to Morro Bay in 2012 and both instantly became involved in their new community.

Ken was Foundation Chairman for Morro Bay Rotary Club and they were Charter Members of the Morro Bay Maritime Museum. They found dear friends at the Presbyterian Church, 39 Dance Club, and Central Coast Classy Birds Car Club. Ken created a painting and needlepoint studio in their Morro Bay home where he created meaningful works of art for many friends and family members.

Ken is survived by his wife, Elsie, son Mike (Melinda), Granddaughter Stephanie (Bryan) Grandson Justin, Sister Kay Ross, Cousin Bud Weeks (Marcia) and Elsie’s children Kim (Rande), Joni (Russ) and Brad (Jenni) plus six grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren who were proud to call him “Grandpa.”

Paul Robert Dubois
1934 – 2021

Paul was born in Los Angeles California and grew up in the town of Hawthorne in LA County. He moved with his wife Jo Ann and their children to Grover in 1975. After a short stint in San Luis, Paul moved to Baywood in 1985. Paul loved life in Baywood. In his later years he spent many hours reading the paper and drinking his coffee while parked in Montana de Oro.

Paul started working as a carpenter. Talented and innovative, Paul worked his way up from framing houses to supervising large construction projects from commercial buildings, large housing tracts and custom homes. One job was Chuck Norris’ original Dojo in Torrance (where Paul ended up taking classes). Paul could build or repair most anything and was “that guy” that people would come to “figure out” or “fix” things. Later in life Paul found joy in making jewelry and hand crafting small metal frogs.

As a teenager Paul became interested in the hot rod scene of Southern California. Paul’s love of motors and racing stayed with him throughout his life. He raced Lyons Drag Strip as well as El Mirage Dry Lake. His motor work took him to Bonneville and Indianapolis. He eventually left construction for a carrier with Cosworth Racing where he was responsible for the development of the midget racing division. Paul was well known at Santa Maria and other raceways across the US as a consultant for Cosworth and later as an independent race engine builder and fuel injection specialist.

He married four times. He and his first wife, Fran Means, had two children, Dennis and Kenny. After his first marriage ended Paul was drafted into the army. He served in Panama where he met his second wife JoAnn. They had three children, Paul Robert, Don, Terry Ann (now Pearson) and Michael (Mickey) Jones from JoAnn’s first marriage. Later, Paul married Martha Berman and finally to Jill Stern. Paul had 8 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

Paul loved to travel and did, to many places. He also loved kayaking in the bay, and his restored horseless carriage. He was always ready with a joke, and sometimes, they were funny. Rest in Peace.

It’s the policy of the Estero Bay News to publish obituaries without charging a fee, unlike other publications. We feel it’s an important service to the community to notify everyone when we lose one of our residents. To that end, we will never charge a fee and will publish as many notices as space permits. If you have lost a loved one, you can send an obituary notice to : editor@esterobaynews.com

Community

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



The Cal Poly Choirs will present “Breathe in Hope,” a virtual winter concert that will feature a variety of selections on the theme of perseverance and hope, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 13.

PolyPhonics will perform music by Camille Saint-Saëns and influential African American composer Adolphus Hailstork.

The University Singers will present music by André Thomas, plus Ernst Toch’s celebrated “Geographical Fugue.”

Dale Trumbore’s “Breathe in Hope” will be performed by the Cal Poly Women’s Chorus. The piece is based on a Facebook post in response to the killing of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling.

The Cal Poly Chamber Choir will present a special mass with movements from a variety of Renaissance composers that showcase the development of the genres in that period. Scott Glysson conducts the Cal Poly Choirs, which are accompanied by Paul Woodring.

Tickets to the virtual event are \$10 and can be purchased online from the Performing Arts Center. To order by phone, call 805-SLO-4TIX (805-756-4849) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information, visit the music department’s calendar website, email music@calpoly.edu or call 805-756-2406.

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The Cal Poly Symphony presents its annual Soloist Showcase through a virtual presentation at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 12.

The symphony held auditions in November for student soloists from a variety of majors for the opportunity to be featured in the showcase. The winners were computer engineering major Kiran Manikonda on clarinet and Grant Smith, a double major in civil engineering and music, on piano.

Manikonda will play Gioachino Rossini’s “Introduction, Theme and Variations,” and Smith will perform the first movement from Ludwig van Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor.

The program will also include two movements from Gordon Jacob’s “Old Wine in New Bottles,” performed by the winds and brass of the orchestra, and Edvard Grieg’s “Two Elegiac Melodies,” performed by the strings.

The orchestra has rehearsed and recorded as a hybrid ensemble since the fall. This included an in-person string ensemble meeting inside, in-person wind and brass musicians meeting outside, and other student musicians joining remotely from home. The combined efforts of these three means of performing will make up the presentation.

Immediately following the recorded performance, there will be a live Q&A session with Music Professor and conductor David Arrivé, the soloists, and other students.

Tickets to the virtual event are \$5 and can be purchased online from the Performing Arts Center. To order by phone, call 805-SLO-4TIX (805-756-4849) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The event is sponsored by Cal Poly’s Music Department, College of Liberal Arts and Instructionally Related Activities program.

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

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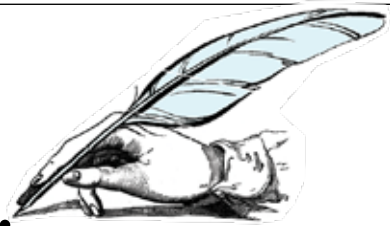
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Letters
To
The Editor



Jewish Community
Responds to Anti-Semitic
Vandalism

It is with distress yet a sense of responsibility that we write this letter in response to the disquieting violation and display of hate that occurred in our community on Friday, February 5, 2021 at the Cal Poly Jewish fraternity house, Alpha Epsilon Pi.

Late into the Jewish observance of Shabbat, a rest that lasts from sundown on Friday through Saturday, the AEPi house on California Avenue in San Luis Obispo was defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti, including swastikas and other vile language.

On behalf of the Central Coast Jewish community, we pen this letter to state that we will not stand for any display of anti-Semitic rhetoric. Instead, we work to ensure San Luis Obispo is a safe and welcoming community - for our Jewish students, community, and neighbors and friends of all backgrounds.

AEPi has released the below letter in response to the anti-Semitic graffiti. Jewish area leadership not only endorses the fraternity's statements, but also seeks to respond to this hate crime with actions in coordination with the students. We are currently waiting to hear from both the Jewish students as to their preferences for steps that should be taken and from the San Luis Obispo Police Department regarding the status of its investigation before we formulate a response.

This incident is currently under an active investigation. Please feel free to respond with any questions or comments you would like to share in the meantime.

This community letter is an initial response to what has been deemed a hate crime by the San Luis Obispo Police Department. Further statements and action will come as the active investigation yields results.

In addition to this community letter, AEPi Cal Poly SLO has set up a GoFundMe page to raise money for Antisemitism Awareness: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/alpha-epsilon-pi-slo-antisemitism-awareness>.

Funds are to support Jewish educational and cultural awareness efforts with another Festival for Jewish Learning,

a two to three day learning celebration on campus. The first such festival was hosted in May 2019 and plans are underway for another one after pandemic restrictions have lifted. More details on the initial Jewish learning festival can be found here: <https://www.jccslo.com/learning.html>

For more information regarding the local Jewish community, contact the JCC Office at info@jccslo.com, or call 805-426-5465.

In response to anti-Semitic graffiti that vandalized the Alpha Epsilon Pi, a Jewish fraternity, house on Friday, February 5, all area Jewish congregations and organizations have signed off on the letter.

Check Out Cambria
Rotary

The Rotary Club of Cambria's Peacebuilders Committee is dedicated to assisting our membership and our community in engaging in dialogue and projects that promote peace at home, in the community and around the world by helping each person commit fully to living "their piece of peace" as well as embracing the foundation of any community and global peace--respecting the humanity of all by celebrating both our diversity and our commonalities. We are guided by the Rotary Vision statement: "Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves." As Rotarians, we are engaged in the process of fostering peace whenever we practice Service Above Self in our various Avenues of Service.

In addition to beginning our weekly Rotary meetings (Fridays at noon--via Zoom) with a quote about peace from Dr. Joe Morrow, we offer peace-centered programs at least once a quarter. Our "peace" speakers during Rotary Year 2020/2021 have been:

Oct. 2 - Rudy Westervelt, Past District Governor of Rotary District 5330 and member of the One World Peace Rotary club, spoke to us about the multitude of programs Rotary engages in around the world that help advance the cause of peace.

Nov. 20 - As a lead in to the holidays, our committee program consisted of a short video about peace produced by the Prem Rawat Foundation. We then broke up into small groups to discuss what each of us had done to create peace in our lives during the past week. Our membership embraced the exercise and the sharing throughout the process was both relatable and inspirational.

Dec. 11 - Sakeen Ali from the Peace Corps discussed how the organization helps create peace around the world

through engagement with local communities.

Jan. 15 - Brian Rusch, a Rotarian who has worked with the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, spoke about peace and LGBTQ inclusion.

Jan. 29 - Willow Baker, the Peacebuilder Chair of the Rotary Club of Conejo Valley and the Program Director of the Peace Education Program of the Prem Rawat Foundation, shared a presentation underscoring that peace on any level always begins with the individual.

Currently the Peacebuilders and Youth Service Committees are coordinating with Sarah Johnston, English Department Head at Coast Union High School, to sponsor a Peace Essay contest for the Senior Class. Ms. Johnston has structured the inquiry and critical thinking module of the curriculum to focus on the concept of Peace. We look forward to gaining insight and inspiration from our seniors on this most timely of topics and will invite the three winners to share their essays with our Club on April 23rd.

If you are interested in our Peacebuilders Committee programs or any other of our Rotary Club programs please contact the Rotary Club of Cambria at cambriarotaryclub@gmail.com or call 805-769-4749.

Nancy Carr
Rotary Club of Cambria

Mensches for Humanity



A swastika at the doorpost of a Jewish Fraternity is a heinous, abhorrent crime of hate. A naive reaction could be some stupid kids making a juvenile prank. But our traumatic history was triggered in an already stressful period for our world and our nation; we relived Camp Auschwitz on the Capitol Steps, Pittsburgh and Poway, Charlottesville and the Shoah (Holocaust), all the way back to the core of Jewish Identity- oppression in Egypt.

All of this hatred in the hot pot of our social media could create another cycle of blame and scapegoating. To use this trauma to exacerbate our polarized discourse could not be easier and would be more damaging than the spray paint power blasted away hours after the incident. I cannot speak to the motives or influences of the perpetrator, but I can speak to my belief that the Cal Poly community must now make its motives and influences clear, as a space where

Letters Continued on page 15

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**Volunteers
Needed**

The City of Morro Bay is seeking for volunteers for the following Advisory Body positions:

Public Works Advisory Board - (3)**

Harbor Advisory Board - (2)

- Alternate Representative from the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Organization

Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board - (2)

- Hotelier (Member-at-Large)
- Hotelier (50 or less rooms)

Application and eligibility information are available on the City Clerk's Advisory Body webpage or by request to the City Clerk's office at (805) 772-6568 or cityclerk@morrobayca.gov

The deadline to apply is Friday, February 26, 2021 by 5:00 pm.

****Must be a Morro Bay Resident & Registered Voter of the City**



Local Schools From page 1

This school year began as the last one ended, with schools bereft of students and kids learning online.

The reopening plan drafted by Resolute Associates, LLC of San Luis Obispo, with various aspects worked on by committees of teachers and other school officials, said, “Any level of school reentry will have some risk to students, staff, and the community of increased virus transmission. This reentry plan offers methods and guidance that aim to minimize transmission rates, provide educational opportunities, and enable District schools to be adaptive and flexible to changing conditions.”

That phrase, “changing conditions” could be used to sum up the coronavirus pandemic response by the State, as several methods of quantifying the virus’ spread have been used by the Governor’s Office and the California Department of Public Health, sometimes switching metrics with little notice.

For example, not allowing restaurants to serve indoors, then limiting it to outdoors only, then only takeout service was allowed, and now, a return to outdoor dining, is just one aspect that has spread confusion and hardship throughout the state.

As science has learned more and more about the virus, guidelines have changed. “On Dec. 30, 2020,” the District’s plan reads, “CDPH released new scientific findings and a corresponding rationale stating that a growing body of evidence shows particularly strong findings that lower risks of transmission of COVID-19 occur at elementary schools, children have lower rates of infection compared to adults and, even in communities with high COVID-19 case counts, the use of layered and carefully implemented mitigation strategies prevent the spread of COVID-19.”

The guidelines set a rather low bar for school re-openings. “Under the Guidance,” the Board’s Resolution reads, “a school is considered to be ‘open’ or to have ‘reopened’ if they offered all students, in at least one grade, the option to return for in-person instruction for at least part of the school-week. The District may not have met this definition of ‘open’ or ‘reopen,’ because the only educational programs that were open were transitional kindergarten and small cohort services.”

The CDPH had set reopening standards that were too tough to meet, as originally the standard was when the “County COVID-19 case rate is less than 25 cases per 100,000 population per day for five consecutive days before the school reopens,” plus the District had to post its reopening plan and seven days had to pass “without subsequent disapproval,” according to the Resolution.

The CDPH lowered its cutoff rate to “less than seven cases per 100,000 population over a seven-day average,” which the Resolution points out would fall in the “Red Tier” of the Governor’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

On Jan. 26, the CDC released new guidelines based on the latest scientific findings. The CDC said, “There has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission” with preventative safety measures in place. “CDC also urges schools to open, stating ‘It is critical for schools to open as safely and

as quickly as possible for in-person learning.’

“The CDC explained that ‘Schools play an important role in children’s educational achievement, health, and wellbeing,” and that “schools can also play an important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19, while ensuring that children have a safe and healthy learning environment.”

Also, new CDC Director, Rochelle Walensky said, “Vaccination of teachers is not a prerequisite for safe reopening of schools.” But she also cautioned that new COVID-19 variants popping up across the country could threaten that positive momentum.

The Resolution also points out that California had already vaccinated 4.4 million people and that teachers and school staff are included in the current phase of vaccination and so they should soon be able to make an appointment to get the vaccine through the County Health Department.

“Throughout the past two months,” the school board’s Resolution reads, “the District has been in constant communication with the San Luis Obispo County Health Department to coordinate and encourage the delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations to District staff.”

News reports locally and across the nation have decried that school kids are falling behind fast in their grades, and are suffering mental health crises. The District Board acknowledged it’s happening here too.

“The impact of distance learning on students, which has resulted in a significant decline in first grade reading proficiency compared to last year, and increases of D’s and F’s for several categories of seventh and eighth grade students. These findings are consistent with statewide research released in the past month showing ‘substantial learning loss’ overall in English language arts and math, especially in the elementary grades, and a substantial increase in failing grades.”

The District has done its best during a difficult time. “The coronavirus has impacted all of our District community — students, staff and families,” Superintendent Dr. Prater wrote in the reopening plan. “Through it all, the District has continuously done our very best to provide uninterrupted educational opportunities for all of our students.

“Together we have been resilient and creative, as we all have learned to navigate safely through this pandemic emergency.

“We are now entering a new phase where we must remain nimble and flexible in our roles as educators as we care for students and staff. When school reopens in the fall, whether virtually or in person, it will not look the same. This will be a challenge and require all of us to be our best selves while COVID-19 remains a part of our reality.”

Of note, when Morro Bay High School students go back to class hopefully by March 15, they will have a noticeable absence in the new administration building.

Principal Dr. Kyle Pruitt, who left on leave last year, no longer works at MBHS.

“Dr. Pruitt is currently out and will return to SLCUSD later this school year,” Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Kimberly McGrath, said. “He has resigned as principal of Morro Bay High School for the next school year.”

Assistant Principal Jeff Cadwallader “is currently serving as the interim principal,” she said.

McGrath said the plan is to start recruiting for a new principal after the end of school in June.

Pipeline From page 1

Four pipes will be installed, two raw sewage lines, a pipe returning the reusable wastewater for recycling, and a water pipe carrying unusable wastewater back to Atascadero Road for ocean disposal.

Phase 2 includes two new lift stations — one at the sewer plant site on Atascadero Road and the other under a vacant lot on Main Street next to Lemos Ranch Pet Store — plus a pipeline from a lift station in the Front Street parking lot to Main Street. It also includes injection wells on the power plant property, which he said would get further testing in April-May.

They’re looking at an 11-month schedule for the



This map shows the route the City of Morro Bay’s new sewage conveyance system will take in its 3.5 mile run to a new treatment plant above South Bay Boulevard.

pipeline work, Casares said. Contractor for the job is Anvil Const. The first segment is being dug now, from La Loma Street to South Bay Boulevard.

Work is scheduled for 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. weekdays and there will be traffic controls in place. Indeed, a detour now on Quintana Road at La Loma re-routes traffic back to Hwy 1 for anyone seeking to get to South Bay Boulevard.

Different segments of the pipelines will follow with the area from the Roundabout to La Loma Street slated for June-August.

The pipeline work along the Quintana shopping district will be from now through May. “This is probably the most important segment for businesses,” Casares said. “We’re looking to complete it before summer.”

That segment will see traffic detoured off Quintana with approaches to the shopping centers via Kennedy Way.

Work down the bike path behind the power plant will be somewhat tricky, as there are two creeks — Morro Creek and Willow Camp Creek — that must be crossed. They plan to work that area from June-December.

The lift station on Main will take the longest and also last through December. There will be quite a lot of truck traffic as there is a lot of dirt that will need to be hauled away but it shouldn’t mean detours on Main Street.

A segment from Atascadero lift station to the Hwy 1 on ramp at Atascadero Road is scheduled for September-December.

That segment would be the last one built, Casares said. He added that they were unable at this time to give details as to many of the traffic controls and detours because the overall traffic plan is not done yet.

Outreach manager, Rossetto, explained that they intend to use various types of communication methods — direct mailings, door hangers, public service announcements with the media, traffic apps, e-blasts signage and updates through a special project website, <https://morrobaywrf.com>.

She said they also plan to visit affected businesses in person and there’s an email address set up too, see: wrfinfo@morrobayca.gov or call (877) 667-7622 with questions. She pledged that all inquiries would be answered within one business day.

“Block by block,” Rossetto said, “you’ll first get a visit to your business.” That initial heads-up will be a week before road closures, followed up with door hangers put out the day before the road closes. They will do the same for the paving that will be done to streets to cover the trench scars in the roadway.

They will also issue flyers that businesses can print and post in their windows to let their customers know they are still open and how to reach them. Weekend or night work might also be necessary during the project.

Rossetto said they will hold, “First Friday” monthly Zoom meetings for updates. Sign up for those on the project website.

How will they handle the Roundabout?

Livick said they decided to tunnel underneath instead of tearing it up. So a pit on both sides of the traffic circle will need to be dug and they’ll do directional drilling to go underneath. “Traffic flow will be maintained at all times,” he said of one of the city’s busiest intersection.

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



KEVIN O'CONNOR, President

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Police Hope From page 11

program, putting together cool sports cars and muscle cars the kids could call their own.

Morro Bay’s first D.A.R.E. car was a circa-1980s Chevy Camaro. It was purchased at a police seizure auction and has been seen recently still driving around in town in private ownership.

The Sheriff’s Department has a Dodge Viper that was also seized from drug dealers.

Before the coronavirus pandemic hit, Cmdr. Watkins said the Chief had begun to put the idea into motion. The kids were asked what they wanted the car to have in terms of graphics and paint, and many of their ideas were used.

“We thought it would be a fun project for the kids, the SRO and police department,” Cmdr. Watkins said. Ofc. Stuart started asking for donations from local businesses to pay for the Charger’s makeover, but then the coronavirus pandemic hit, and Cmdr. Watkins said donations pretty much dried up, which she said was understandable given the restrictions that were placed on businesses by the Governor.

“It was put on the back-burner,” she explained. But Chief Cox and Ofc. Stuart didn’t give up on the idea. “They were motivated to get it done.”

So instead of the kids designing the decals, the department got creative and put together the design, ordering the special decals from The Graphics Shop and having Goofy Graphics install them.

“We wanted to do this in-person [with the school kids] but COVID put a damper on that,” Cmdr. Watkins said.

They knew the high school kids wanted the school’s pirate logo on the car. “That was a big part of it,” she said. They also designed another for the Del Mar Dolphins, the

mascot of the local elementary school.

The department’s official logo, which features a MBPD badge, was also redesigned.

The Charger was repainted by MAACO, and a blue racing stripe was added. The stripe, “Makes it a little more sports car-ish,” she said. The car’s new rims were from Hinson’s Tire here in Morro Bay. “We’ve been able to keep it pretty much local,” Cmdr. Watkins said of the people who’ve contributed to it.

They took the emergency light bar off the roof and Drive Customs of SLO installed red and blue lights in the car’s interior, that way it can still be used as a regular patrol car. “It’s still a fully-functioning patrol car,” Cmdr. Watkins said, “just really cool.”

They also looked internally to find money for the transformation. “It just didn’t feel right to continue to reach out to businesses who are struggling big time,” Cmdr. Watkins said.

So the department has used some of the “Community Oriented Policing” or COPS grant the City gets every year. COPS grant monies are to be used for police needs, and a makeover of an old patrol car was chosen for part of the money. The City normally gets \$100,000 a year from the State’s COPS Program, which is population based.

She added that the department hopes the kids will like it, when they finally get to go back to school. Local school children have been doing online learning since the start of the pandemic last March.

“There was good interest when we presented the idea to the student body,” Cmdr. Watkins said. “We’re excited for when the kids come back and they get to see it on a daily basis.”

When I sit by the Baywood Park pier watching the sunsets as I often do, it’s difficult to believe that at one time in the 1950s boats were rented at the pier that extended out into the bay.

Zelle Diefenderfer, who lived on Third Street in Baywood Park, worked for Richard Otto.

She was in charge of renting his boats. Whenever a visitor wanted to rent a boat he could ring a bell that was attached from the pier to Zelle’s house so she could respond to it and go to the pier to attend to business.

According to some old timers, there are stories of people being stranded in the bay when the tide went out because they would try to walk their way to the shore with the changing tide. Those who were stranded were urged to stay in their boat until the tide came in because several times people got stuck in the sandy muck and had to have the fire department rescue them.

Richard Otto had many talents. esides being an ordained minister he had several business ventures in the area he called Baywood Park Estates. He even attempted to have the bay dredged in the 1950s.

Reference: All About Baywood Park by Joan Sullivan



Letters From page 13

this hatred will not stand. I am grateful that campus and community law enforcement and our University are taking this seriously and will pursue justice for our Jewish student community to the full extent of the law.

This crime also triggers many of our current fissures in society. When a Latino victim of the Walmart shooting rampage in El Paso said, “we are the new Jews”, he was only partly right, in claiming the Jewish experience as a source of comparison through which to speak that of Latino persecution. The Jewish experience can serve as a metaphor for other groups to speak of their own persecution, but for the Jews, the experience of suffering is anything but a metaphor.

Our community contains a multitude of various ethnicities and classes and a diverse culture, and we continue to be considered alien by some in our own homes and homeland. There are many other “others” who suffer under this othering banner of exclusion and violence; African

Americans, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ communities and other excluded victims of hate. The Swastikas were imprinted on our door, but they were directed at all minority groups, an attempt to intimidate, antagonize, and threaten our belonging to this larger community of the campus, the nation, the world.

We will remain proud of our heritage as Jews, but we must not make this violence an exclusive badge of horror. Our most important prayer commands us to listen to the unique expression of each divine soul and the divinity of all humanity. We must not only connect the vertical dots of Jewish hatred; we must connect the dots on our domestic horizon among our diversities and ethnicities, what makes our America so great from its foundation.

My teachers, the gentlemen of AEPi, choose to stand on the shoulders of Giants. By creating a GoFundMe page to protect their home in security, contribute to education about our past (Yad Vshem, the Holocaust Museum in Israel), and help support our SLO Jewish Community Festival of Learning, they have inspired people beyond our borders with positive action. The GoFundMe can be found here: <https://gofund.me/c75a26bd>. The Festival will be dedicated to education for all of SLO county, within the University and for our community to share not only about antisemitism and the Shoah, but about racism, intolerance

and hate, by nurturing dialogue, understanding and love of humanity. Their menschie-ness, (which means the best of humans) is a lesson for all of us. Our students are our greatest teachers. We have a lot of school to attend.

Rabbi Micah
Hyman Executive Director SLO Hillel

Kudos to Us

Just a quick note of true appreciation for what you folks are doing. We discovered your publication last year and read each issue from cover to cover and back again, always looking forward to the next one.

We have lived in Cambria for the past 30 years and without a doubt the Estero Bay News is the most comprehensive and fact filled local newspaper we have ever had the pleasure of reading. In fact it is the ONLY ONE as we do not subscribe nor read any others.

Keep up the good work you all. Know that you are appreciated more than words can express.

Rich and Bobra
Cambria

The Salvation Army Gives Thanks

Thanks to an outpouring of generosity from the community during this past holiday season, The Salvation Army was able to assist hundreds of needy families and individuals in San Luis Obispo County.

Our volunteer bell-ringers deserve special acknowledgment for safely showing up during a pandemic to greet people and accept donations. We also want to give a big shout-out to the numerous fire departments and police stations, churches, banks and other companies that provided space and helped collect food and toys.

But most of all, we say thank you to this amazing community. Because of you, we were able to provide food, clothing, gift cards, books and toys to many grateful individuals.

Capt. Elaine Mansoor
Executive Director and Pastor of the
San Luis Obispo County Salvation Army

Batteries at the Beach

Wow, 180,000 lithium-ion fire prone batteries right at the beach in Morro Bay. What could go wrong? I remember many articles in the local papers a few years ago about many millions being spent to upgrade the Morro Bay, Cayucos sewer plant at its present location. With most other permits granted the Coastal Commission said “why would we approve this project when the ocean is going to rise 35 feet?”

I didn’t realize lithium-ion batteries could operate under seawater. A better solution would be to keep Diablo Canyon on line because nukes produce clean power even when the wind doesn’t blow and the sun doesn’t shine.

Ed Wing
Morro Bay

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

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Antique images from Dean Sullivan's personal collection.
On left: top, Cayucos; bottom, Cambria
On right: top, Morro Bay; center, Los Osos; bottom, Baywood Park.

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