

## Second Cannabis Store Opens in Downtown

By Neil Farrell



Natural Healing Center, a cannabis retailer, is now open at 495 Morro Bay Blvd.

A second marijuana store has opened in Morro Bay in a spiffed-up storefront at Morro Bay Boulevard and Napa Avenue, in the heart of Downtown.

Natural Healing Center or “nhc” for short held a soft opening and Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting on Monday, April 12 in the former long-time home of Mill’s Stationary and ASAP Reprographics, 495 Morro Bay Blvd. Mill’s/ASAP moved last year to a store on Quintana Road just down from Main Street.

The Morro Bay store is nhc’s second in San Luis Obispo County. The company opened a Grover Beach store nearly 2-years ago and is now working on a San Luis Obispo location on Broad Street.

The company also has a store in Lemoore and after the SLO location opens, slated before the end of 2021, a fifth store will be built in Turlock, Calif., located just south of

Modesto on Hwy 99.

Several large marijuana and hemp farms in SLO County including two on Los Osos Valley Road near the intersection with Foothill Boulevard at a former berry farm belong to nhc.

The new store was extensively remodeled inside and out, with a new paint scheme and front façade using barnwood-like wooden siding painted in a whitewash.

It features stylish canopies along the front of the building and windows treatments that let in light but you can’t see through, lending a modicum of privacy for customers.

It’s hard to believe it’s the same store, as the change is that dramatic from the stationary store that operated there for decades.

Inside, the transformation is even more dramatic, with a beautiful stone front desk and a lobby with two living

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## Day-1 SNAFUs Hit WRF Pipeline Project

By Neil Farrell

Mr. Murphy is no doubt laughing. Morro Bay’s new sewer project hit a couple of snags recently, when they accidentally broke a water main and then ruptured a temporary sewer line on the very day they started the massive trenching work.

They didn’t have a good day, said Joe Mueller, the City’s sewer and water department head who was also the City’s acting Public Works Director until recently, when the City Manager hired a new full time director.

Mueller said they got called about 1 p.m. Wednesday, April 7 to the construction site on Quintana Road at La Loma Street.

“One of their backhoe operators hit a known water line,” Mueller told Estero Bay News. He added that the water line was marked in the street (along with all other utility lines) and that the company had yet to tell the City why the accident occurred. “It was definitely their responsibility,” Mueller said, “and they are taking responsibility for it.”

The City’s maintenance crew responded to the scene, cleaned up the mess and repaired the water line, he said. It took about 4 hours.

He estimated that 54,000 gallons of drinking water was leaked directly from the City’s Kings Street water tanks. That’s where the City receives state water deliveries and blends treated groundwater from the Morro Creek Basin at Lila Keiser Park for delivery throughout the City.

Mueller said numerous customers lost water pressure but no one completely lost water service because of Anvil’s line break.



Just as they were getting finished up fixing the water pipe, Anvil had another mishap about a half mile down Quintana.

Mueller explained that as part of the project, the City’s lift station 3 (LS-3), which sits underground near the intersection of South Bay Boulevard and Quintana Road, has to be temporarily bypassed so they can redirect the flow.

LS-3 collects raw sewage from a condominium development, two trailer parks and the Casa de Flores Assisted Living Home, pushing it uphill under Quintana Road all

**Pipeline** Continued on page 14

## Man Who Revitalized Baywood Park Remembered

By Neil Farrell



Bill Lee. Photo by Dean Sullivan

Bill Lee, who died April 5 from cancer, left a legacy of innovation on the real estate industry across the U.S. and Canada, mentoring and inspiring thousands of real estate professionals; but he’ll also be warmly remembered for the significant mark he left on Baywood Park.

Bill Lee founded the Lee & Associates firm in 1979 in Orange County and over the years the company grew into 65 offices and over 1,300 employees, with a yearly consideration value of \$14 billion, according to an obituary posted on the company’s website.

“On this difficult day,” Lee & Associates CEO, Jeffrey Rinkov said, “I stand in tremendous appreciation with the thousands of real estate professionals and their families that have been so positively impacted by the company Bill created and the unique structure that has served us for 41-plus years.”

“Bill’s passing will be felt throughout Lee & Associates and the greater commercial real estate industry.”

Bill Lee had an incredibly successful and productive life in both business and a human level. When he died, the loss was felt here at home, as he had for many years been a driving force in the revitalization of Baywood Park, and contributed greatly to the renewed sense community and sheer fun that he brought to the tiny little commercial district by Baywood Inlet and mudflats.

**Bill Lee** Continued on page 14

## Moving Forward: Lost Isle Tiki Cruise and Whale Watching

Judy Salamacha



The Lost Isle Adventures boat in Morro Bay

Captain Dane Jacob’s positive attitude could not be daunted by a 2020 worldwide pandemic. From childhood he learned to make-do with what came his way.

I love a challenge - being the underdog,” he said. “We grew up dirt poor. We didn’t even have a TV. When my parents divorced, my sister and I split time living with my dad in Long Beach and Mom in Cayucos and we always found ways to enjoy the life around us.”

Dane has always gravitated towards sailing and seaside activities. He spent 10 years life-guarding for the Long Beach Fire Department.

He attended Los Osos Middle School and Morro Bay High School. He was most proud, however, to surprise everyone he knew by graduating in 2011 from Cal Poly with honors. He found his niche while majoring in small

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Adventure  
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# Arrests Made in Kristin Smart Murder

By Neil Farrell



County Sheriff Ian Parkinson looks down at an enlarged photo of Cal Poly co-ed, Kristin Smart, who disappeared from campus in May 1996 during an April 13 news conference. Photo by Neil Farrell

It's been a quarter century since Cal Poly co-ed, Kristin Smart vanished, but the County Sheriff's Office last week finally arrested the only suspect in the case, and charged him with her murder.

On April 13 County Sheriff Ian Parkinson held a news briefing outside Cal Poly's Orfalea Business School. The Sheriff said it was fitting to make the announcement at Cal Poly where it all started so long ago.

"This is a day many hoped for, many wished for and prayed for," Sheriff Parkinson told the crowd of news reporters from both local and national outlets.

There were also about 100 current Poly students on hand to hear the news about a case that happened before they were born but one that all were probably aware of.

The Sheriff announced that they had arrested Paul Flores, 44, that morning at his home in San Pedro on suspicion that he murdered Smart. At the same time they arrested his father, Ruben Flores, 80, at his home in Arroyo Grande for suspicion of accessory to murder.

The younger Flores was driven to SLO County that morning and booked at County Jail and is being held without bail. His father's bail was set at \$250,000, the Sheriff said.

The Sheriff described Paul Flores as originally a "person of interest" in the case, then for years he was referred to as the "only suspect," and finally just a few months ago, he was called the "prime suspect" in her disappearance.

And now that charges have been filed, any hope of Smart's somehow still being alive appear dashed with the murder charge. Smart's body has yet to be found. Sheriff Parkinson, who was with the San Luis Obispo

Police Department when Smart disappeared on May 26, 1996, rededicated the Sheriff's Department to solving it after he was elected in 2011.

The Sheriff's Department was brought in by Cal Poly Police fairly early in the investigation, after they were notified that Smart was missing on May 28, 1996, two days after she was last seen in Paul Flores' company.

The story at the time had Flores and another young woman helping an intoxicated Smart home from an off campus party to the dormitory where the freshman lived at the time. It was Memorial Day Weekend when she disappeared, and the campus was largely empty for the holiday.

The other girl left them and Flores was supposed to help Smart get home. She was never seen again and Flores was interviewed early on but requested a lawyer and has reportedly not spoken to investigators since.

The case dragged on but was never completely out of the public eye, as her memory was kept alive through annual commemorations on her birthdays; and the establishment of a pocket park in her memory in Pismo Beach overlooking the ocean.

The case has been kept in the public eye by billboards along Hwy 101; by the Smart Family, who live in Stockton, keeping her memory alive with frequent news interviews; and their efforts to bring justice to their daughter, who was just 19 when she disappeared.

A wrongful death lawsuit the Smart Family filed years ago, has been on hold as the criminal case was investigated.

A lawyer in Arroyo Grande has for many years had a large sign seeking information about the case in front of his office in the Village, and most recently, an 8-part podcast, "Your Own Backyard," produced by Chris Lambert refocused attention on the case and Flores' involvement.

Sheriff Parkinson credited Lambert's podcast with assisting the investigation and leading them to two witnesses who had never been interviewed before.

The beginning of the unraveling of this case started several years ago when the Sheriff's Department along with the FBI conducted a search of the hillside behind the dorms at Cal Poly, near the famous "P" on the hill.

That search resulted in over 37 items of evidence being submitted for DNA testing; the results of which have never been divulged publicly.

Sheriff Parkinson said since he took office in January 2011, they've served 41 search warrants; conducted "physical evidence searches" at 16 separate locations; conducted a complete review of every item of physical evidence in the case and from all agencies involved.

They submitted 37 evidence items from the early days of the investigation for modern DNA testing. They've recovered 193 new items of evidence and conducted 137 person-to-person interviews, and written 513 "supplemental reports" in the case.

He said the case file has over 3 terabytes of information.

"My hope," Sheriff Parkinson said, "is that we're able to take this first step towards justice for the Smart Family." He added that the arrests were, "A bit of a relief but until we find Kristin this is not over."

At the press conference, the Sheriff's office displayed a large photo of Paul Flores shows him in a T-shirt, pajama pants and house slippers, hands in handcuffs being led away by Lo Angeles County Sheriff's deputies. The Floreses were to be arraigned last Thursday, though if Ruben Flores makes bail, his appearance could be delayed.

The SLO Sheriff's Department has now turned the case over to the District Attorney for prosecution. D.A. Dan Dow said in a news release, "These charges mark a major milestone. Today, we make the first move toward bringing justice to Kristin, her family, and the people of San Luis Obispo County."

In his news release, Dow laid out the basic theory of the crime. "Paul Flores has been charged with first degree murder. It is alleged he caused Kristin's death while in the commission of or attempt to commit rape. Ruben Flores is charged with accessory after the fact to the crime of murder. The allegation is that Ruben helped conceal Kristin's body after she was murdered."

That scenario varies little from the theory of the crime

that emerged shortly after Smart disappeared.

The Sheriff revealed that they have had Paul Flores under electronic surveillance — email, texts and cell phone calls — since 2019. Last February, they simultaneously served search warrants at Paul Flores' home in San Pedro, as well as his mother's and his father's Arroyo Grande homes and that of his sister.

In April 2020 they served search warrants at Paul Flores' home and "recovered evidence related to the murder of Kristin Smart."

And just last month more search warrants were served with Sheriff's investigators using cadaver dogs and ground penetrating radar, even cutting up a concrete slab at Ruben Flores' home. Still, they have not found her remains, but the Sheriff said they will continue to look for her.

The Sheriff said that forensic physical evidence was located at two of the homes they've searched that were "linked to Kristin Smart." Asked whether he thought the mother, Susan Flores, was involved, he said, "It's not what you believe, it's what you can prove."

As for the podcast, Sheriff Parkinson said Lambert had taken a local story and expanded it nationwide and internationally too. "Once it came out," he said, "we started getting new information." He said the podcast "produced information that was valuable."

He said Denise Smart, Kristin's mother has described the case as "a puzzle" with missing pieces. "This has been a puzzle," he said, "and it's been a very slow process to discover those pieces."

Though the case remains a "no-body homicide," Sheriff Parkinson said, "I'm confident we have enough of a case to prove beyond a reasonable doubt" that Paul Flores killed her.

D.A. Dow asked for the public's help in further investigating Paul Flores.

"We are also seeking the public's assistance in providing any information about this case or information on other potential crimes believed to have been perpetrated by Paul Ruben Flores, including assault or other acts," he said. "Flores was known to frequent bars in the San Pedro area from 2005 to present."

Individuals with any information are encouraged to contact Crime Stoppers at (805) 549-7867 or online at: [www.slotips.org](http://www.slotips.org).



## Estero Bay News Staff

Dean Sullivan  
Owner - Publisher  
[dean@esterobaynews.com](mailto:dean@esterobaynews.com)

Theresa-Marie Wilson  
Editor  
[editor@esterobaynews.com](mailto:editor@esterobaynews.com)

Neil Farrell  
Reporter  
[neil@esterobaynews.com](mailto:neil@esterobaynews.com)

Shari Sullivan  
Marketing Director  
[shari@esterobaynews.com](mailto:shari@esterobaynews.com)

Joan Sullivan  
Jill Turnbow  
Ruth Ann Angus  
Judy Salamacha

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# Los Osos Tests Crosswalk Technology, First in County

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



The first touch-less, pedestrian activation devices in the county are in Los Osos.

The three busiest intersections in Los Osos have new technology aimed at helping pedestrians cross the road in a way that will increase sanitation and reduces maintenance costs.

Touch-less pedestrian activation buttons were installed at South Bay Boulevard, 9th St. and 10th St. along Los Osos Valley Road — the first in the county. San Luis Obispo County Public Works installed the buttons last month.

The device, called “i-Detect” made by Polara, allows people to wave a hand in front of the device and cross the street without having to physically push a button.

“It has the speech functions that tell you to wait or walk, or don’t walk, but rather than actually pressing the button it uses infrared technology,” SLO County Public Works Deputy Director John Waddell said. “When your hand is within a few inches of the button, it detects it. So there’s, still a button there to push, but pushing the button doesn’t do anything; it’s just having your hand close to the button.”

To help those with visual impairments, the buttons also feature a constant beeping sound to help locate the sensors to the crosswalk.

In a pandemic world, a benefit of the contactless feature of the technology is that it does offer some sanitation protection, however, the county is looking at the savings connected to lower maintenance costs.

“A lot of times you see people are waiting there patiently on the corners hitting the buttons again and again and again or people kick it with their foot, and all that abuse can damage the button,” Waddell said.

Most readers probably know someone who repeatedly pushes the crosswalk button thinking it will change the light from red to green faster. Those eager folks might be inclined to wave their hand feverishly in front of the device, both are an exercise in futility — the outcome doesn’t change.

“You only need to push the button [or wave] once,” Waddell said. “Pushing it more often does not make it change faster. Once it’s pushed, it registers the call, but the signal will go through its cycle however long it wants to make you wait depending on the conditions. Pushing it more often is not helping.”

The i-Detect equipment costs \$3000 to \$5000 per intersection based on the number of controllers and the required wiring needed.

Los Osos is the testing area for the devices. If they prove successful, already damaged crosswalk buttons in the county would be replaced with the new technology.

“We like them,” Waddell said. “They seem to be functioning well and it’s cost effective to use these in other

locations especially high use locations. Between sanitation, and the maintenance side of being getting worn out from overuse, I can see these being a good fit for a really high use intersection.”

# Hwy 1 Death Ruled Accidental

A Templeton woman who was found dead at the Hwy 1 construction site at Rat Creek died as the result of an accident, according to the Monterey County Sheriff-Coroner’s Office.

On Thursday, March 25, the Monterey County Sheriff’s Office responded at about 10:30 a.m. to the Caltrans construction site on Hwy 1 after workers discovered a woman’s body at the bottom of the steep scar on the Cliff-side that is being repaired.

That’s where on Jan. 28, some 70,000 cubic yards of material killed by the Dolan Fire the summer prior and left barren, liquefied and slide down the Rat Creek Canyon, overwhelming the storm drains and washing over the roadway.

The flood undermined the road and some 150-linear feet of Hwy 1 was completely washed down to the sea. Caltrans brought in Papich Const. of Arroyo Grande with an \$11.5 million contract to stabilize and repair the roadway, which had to be completely closed in both directions.

The woman whose body was found March 25 was identified as Nancy Lynn Algert, 64 of Templeton. Mrs. Algert is the wife of Morro Bay’s former Harbor Director, Rick Algert, who retired from the City in June 2010 after some 20 years with the City.

According to the Monterey County Sheriff’s Department, “It appears Mrs. Algert had parked her vehicle near the construction site of the wash out on Hwy 1 near Rat Creek and got out on foot. She apparently went around the job site fencing and had been walking around the area.”

They added that there were no indications of foul play in her death.

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<b>Los Osos</b> <p>Views of The Bay &amp; Rock from this amazing lot just steps from the water. \$225,000</p>	<b>Nipomo</b> <p>Two Homes on Quarter Acre mature fruit trees and room to grow. \$876,000</p>

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# Highway 1 to Reopen April 30

By Neil Farrell



These aerial views of the Rat Creek slide on Hwy 1 show the progress of filling in the washed out cliff and looking up the creek canyon from early March (at left) and on March 26. Photos courtesy Caltrans

Repairs on Hwy 1 from a January landslide are going much faster than anticipated prompting Caltrans to move up reopening date several months.

Caltrans announced April 8 that it would reopen Hwy 1 through the Rat Creek slide area by April 30, nearly 2 months ahead of schedule.

Some 150-feet of roadway was completely washed away on Jan. 28, following a multi-day rainstorm that dumped an estimated 12 inches of rain in Big Sur. The area above Rat Creek was burned the previous summer in the massive Dolan Fire.

The heavy rains washed mud and debris down the creek canyon and overwhelmed the storm drains at the road's edge, washing over and undermining the roadway. In the end, about 50 yards (150 feet) of roadway was just gone.

The agency had predicted it wouldn't be until July for the road to reopen and Hwy 1 be open through to Big Sur in each direction.

Caltrans estimated a reopening in early summer when it began emergency repairs March 1 and has been able to accelerate that timeline with favorable weather conditions. Crews can complete remaining construction work after the road reopens.

"Reopening Highway 1 at Rat Creek just three months after a washout of this magnitude is great news for residents, recreationalists, business owners, and those who move goods through this region," Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin said. "Caltrans has been focused on the emergency work needed to increase the resiliency of this highway section to extreme weather, and the fixes made will allow for safe travel."

Caltrans Dist. 5 Director, Tim Gubbins said, "Our

crews have worked to create a safe road in challenging conditions, and we are excited to reopen this lifeline earlier than expected."

The late-January storm that hit the Central Coast Area dropped up to 12 inches of rain over a 3-day period at higher elevations. Caltrans said the storm caused over 60 landslides along Hwy 1 through the Dolan Fire burn scar — over 100,000 acres — that went up in Summer 2020.

Caltrans decided last February on an "enhanced fill design repair strategy," and the contractor, Papich Const. of Arroyo Grande, which landed the \$11.5 million contract started work March 1. The contract included \$5 million in emergency repairs north of Rat Creek.

An estimated 70,000 cubic yards of trees, rocks, and sediment were removed, according to a previous Caltrans news release. It was expected that 25,000 cubic yards of fill would need to be brought in to build up the support for the new roadway.

The road will be open but the work continues. Caltrans will continue construction work that will require intermittent traffic control at Rat Creek following the reopening, as crews will install a new, redundant drainage system, the State said.

Things should be better now. "The 10-foot diameter culvert," Caltrans spokesman Kevin Drabinski said, "will improve water flow during storms and make the roadway more resilient to extreme weather activity. Caltrans will also work on landscaping and installing permanent guard-rails throughout the early summer."

The January 2021 slides closed about 5 miles of the highway — with the southern turnaround at the Big Creek Vista Point (at Post Marker 27.3).

The northern turnaround was set up some 2 miles north of Rat Creek at the Lime Creek Bridge (PM 32.1).

It's good news for local merchants who need the tourism an open Hwy 1 brings. Tourism was deeply hurt while the Mud Creek Slide, the largest in state history, was cleared, stabilized and a new road put in. The highway was closed from May 2017 to August 2018.

## County Clerk Polling Voters

By Neil Farrell



Just about everything in 2020 was changed because of the coronavirus pandemic, including elections nationwide, as well as locally. The San Luis Obispo County Clerk is now asking voters for input on how elections should be conducted in SLO County going forward.

County Clerk-Recorder Tommy Gong announced the "San Luis Obispo County 2021 Voter Survey," being conducted online now at: [www.slovote.com](http://www.slovote.com).

Gong's news release said, "2020 was an eventful year of elections, starting with the March 3 Primary, followed by the historic, Nov. 3 Presidential General Election. "Both elections set records — highest number of registered voters, most ballots cast, and the highest number of vote-by-mail ballots — respectively, for primary and general elections in the county's history."

Last March's Primary in SLO County was the usual "polling place election," but the November Election "required many changes due to the COVID-19 Pandemic,"

Gong said.

The State changed the election rules for November and the County was required to send vote-by-mail ballots to all the voters, a stark change from the normal method of voter's having to request a mail-in ballot. However, voters here have for some time had the option to be placed on permanent vote-by-mail status. COVID, which did not become a "health emergency" until well after the March 3 Primary, changed everything.

"In response to large numbers of poll worker and polling place cancellations over safety concerns," Gong said, "counties were allowed to have fewer in-person voting locations [in our case, 23 voter service centers in November vs. 75 polling places in March], but they were larger locations where poll workers and voters could physically distance and be provided personal protective equipment."

In Morro Bay that meant the church on Ironwood Avenue where ballots have been cast for decades, wasn't open and in-person voters were actually limited to just the Community Center (the Vet's Hall was also closed).

The State also extended the normal, 1-day polling to a 4-day election "to give voters additional days to cast their ballots in person. Voters could go to any voter service center within the county to vote in person." The election also saw numerous "ballot boxes" put out around the County. And though there were fewer places to go and vote, it caused more headaches.

"The operation at voter service centers required much more technology to perform live check-in of voters and print the specific ballots on which they were entitled to vote based on their residence address," Gong said.

Also, "due to capacity limits and prioritization, the following communities did not have a voting location: Cayucos, Creston, Shandon, Santa Margarita, and San Miguel."

Still, the November 2020 Election set local records. There were over 184,050 registered voters — the highest ever, and over 162,615 ballots were cast. The county turnout was 88.35%, shattering the previous record of 83.14% set in 2008, when ex-President Barack Obama was on the ballot.

The biggest 2020 shift came in mail-in voting, which naturally follows if you mail ballots to every registered voter. Some 154,741 people voted by mail, for a whopping 93.3% of total voters. And just 9,874 voted in person, according to Gong's provided statistics.

The County is reportedly "at a crossroads" for conducting future elections and wants voters to chime in. Gong said, "I want to hear from voters how they would like elections to be conducted. I also want to increase public confidence in elections, so this survey will give voters a chance to voice their concerns or provide any input."

He added that the survey will help form the recommendations he will make to County Supervisors in a report for the Elections Office's budget.

The County will next conduct a planned election at the 2022 Primary, which has to be budgeted for in the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget that Supervisors should pass in June.

FY 2021-22 runs from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. There's also the matter of Gov. Gavin Newsom's recall.

"With a possible recall election at the end of the year," Gong said, "it is an opportunity for the county to go back to polling places or continue with a voter service center operation."

Gong said he would present his analysis of the issue and results of the voter survey to Supervisors at their May 3 meeting. His recommendation will be made as part of the budget process and take into account whatever direction he gets from Supervisors.

The voter service center option would require Supervisors to budget more money to pay for it. However, the record turnout might prove a benefit worth the extra expense.

Early results of the survey will be presented on May 4, Gong said, and complete results would be presented in the June budget hearings.

The deadline to take the survey is May 25. See: [www.slovote.com](http://www.slovote.com) to take the survey, and please, unlike elections, just one survey per voter.

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News Briefs  
By Theresa-Marie Wilson

LOCSD Meetings

The Los Osos Community Services 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 will be held via Zoom. Information for each meeting and how to get connected is available on the agenda for each meeting, which can be found at <https://www.losososcscd.org/>. The agenda is posted a minimum of 72 hours before the meeting time.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Finance Advisory Committee Meeting - May 3 at 5:30 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting Open Session - May 6 at 6 p.m. - Streamed live on the districts facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/losososcscd>

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting - May 18 t 5:30 p.m.

Utilities Advisory Committee Meeting - May 19 at 5:30 p.m.

Emergency Services Advisory Committee Meeting - May 20 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. For more information about the upcoming meetings for LOCSD, go to <https://www.losososcscd.org/>.

Distracted Driving Awareness Month



April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month and folks are asked to give the phone a break and focus on the road.

According to the 2020 California Statewide Public Opinion Survey, more than 75% of surveyed drivers listed “Distracted Driving because of Texting” as their biggest safety concern.

Under current law, drivers are not allowed to hold a phone or other electronic device while behind the wheel. Drivers under 18 are not allowed to use a phone for any reason, including hands-free.

If you need to make a call or send a text, pull over and park at a safe location. Drivers should silence their phones or put the phone out of reach, such as the glove box or trunk.

SLO Triathlon Cancelled

Avid competitive athletes will not experience an endorphin high in SLO this July. The 2021 SLO Triathlon has been canceled.

After months of assessing the impacts of COVID-19, the City’s Luis Parks and Recreation Department officially made the decision to cancel the traditional event due to limited time and resources to properly coordinate a safe and quality event.

“We want to thank the community for their continued support for the SLO Triathlon over the past 40 years,” said Parks and Recreation Director, Greg Avakian. “While we are disappointed that we are unable to hold the event for our community and supporters we know it is the best decision at this time. We look forward to coming together as a community for the event in 2022. The amount of preplanning and coordination that requires numerous City resources, organization with sponsors, and promotions takes months to effectively organize this annual event.”

PG&E Makes Clean Power Learderboard

The Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA) released its comprehensive assessment of more than 100 U.S. utilities’ clean power efforts. PG&E demonstrated significant progress, landing it on the 2021 Utility Transformation Leaderboard.

SEPA launched the Utility Transformation Challenge this year in recognition of the increased industry focus on carbon reduction. SEPA analyzed surveys from 135 utilities, representing more than 83 million customer accounts, or approximately 63% of all U.S. electric customer accounts.

“PG&E stands out due to its comprehensive efforts to transition to a carbon-free energy future, and most importantly, its results,” said SEPA President and CEO Julia Hamm. “The transformation to a clean and modern energy system involves much more than clean energy generation; it will require changes to almost every part of a utility’s business. We applaud PG&E for its progress, and recognize that much work remains. The world does not have the luxury of time on carbon reduction.”

The Utility Transformation Challenge evaluated utilities using a survey to assess their actions in four key areas: corporate leadership; clean energy resources; modern grid enablement; and aligned actions and engagement.

SEPA’s assessment found that utilities with strong commitments to carbon reduction have made the most progress in creating a modern, clean electric grid.

The Utility Transformation Profile report and executive summary are available at <https://sepapower.org/utility-transformation-challenge/>

Rent and Utility Relief Available

Renters and landlords have enough things to worry about, and past due rent/utilities shouldn’t be one of them.

If you’re an income eligible renter who has experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19 and have past due rent, or you’re a landlord who has experienced a loss in income because of unpaid rent, you may be eligible to get financial assistance now through the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief program.

Eligible renters can also receive help paying future rent, equal to 25% of their monthly amount to help them stay in their homes, and 100% of up to 12 months of unpaid or future utility bills.

Visit [HousingIsKey.com](https://HousingIsKey.com), for more details.

Teens Can Now Get Vaccinated

By Neil Farrell



San Luis Obispo County’s fight against the coronavirus pandemic continues to show great improvement with cases dropping and hospitalizations down to single digits, and the Health Department has opened up vaccinations to people who are old enough to drive.

Teens Can Get the Shot

The Health Department on April 7 announced that anyone 16-older was now able to sign up and get the COVID vaccine. “This opens up the registry to about 54,000 additional San Luis Obispo County community members,” said the County’s COVID spokeswoman, Michelle Shoresman in a news release.

The County is also still prioritizing vaccines for those at risk of bad outcomes — based on age and health conditions — should they catch the disease.

The County Health Officer said it was good news. “This is a milestone we have been looking to for the past year,” Dr. Penny Borenstein said, “and I encourage everyone in our community — including those who have been eligible for some time — to take this opportunity, get the vaccine, and help put this pandemic behind us.”

The County’s three vaccination sites — at the Paso Robles Fairgrounds, the South County Community Center in Arroyo Grande, and at Cuesta College’s Hwy 1 campus — continue to vaccinate people for free.

You must go to the County COVID website and register for an appointment. They will notify you when you can come in.

Most of the vaccines are actually two shots, taken a month apart, so when the first shot is given, you should make an appointment for the second.

However, if you are under-18, the County said you have to get the single-shot Pfizer vaccine because it is currently the only one approved for minors. And if you are a minor, your parents must come with you to get vaccinated.

If you were thinking about going to the pharmacy for a shot, the County said it might not be free. “Please talk with your local pharmacy about any vaccine administration fees they may charge,” the County said, “and check to make sure you are eligible under the guidelines they are following.”

COVID Update Continued on page 6

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COVID Update From page 5

Clots Halt J&J Shots

And in case readers were worried that vaccinations were going too smoothly, one of the serums has been pulled off the proverbial shelf, after a small handful people nationwide developed a rather severe complication.

The County announced April 13 that it was temporarily halting giving Johnson & Johnson's COVID vaccine, while further studies are done on an rare complication.

"County officials are following CDC and FDA recommendations," the news release said, "to pause administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as federal officials review six cases in which people developed a rare type of blood clot after getting the vaccine."

Some 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine had already been administered when the complications were identified.

"While adverse events like these blood clots appear to be extremely rare," Dr. Borenstein said, "we appreciate the agencies' full focus on the health of our communities and will await further guidance from the CDC and the FDA before administering any further doses of the single-dose vaccine."

The side effect involves a type of blood clotting called, "cerebral venous sinus thrombosis" or CVST and has been discovered in women ages 18-48. Symptoms appear about 13 days after vaccination. The County said it had already administered 2,200 doses of the J&J vaccine at its three clinics.

Now, while six out of 6.8 million is statistically insignificant, the County said the CSD was acting out of an abundance of caution. The J&J vaccine has also been halted in many European countries, as well, for the same reason.

Dr. Borenstein said, "If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination, you should contact your health care provider. " She expected to have an update soon after the CDC's advisory panel meets to discuss the clotting issue.

The County continues administering two other vaccines made by Moderna and Pfizer.

Utility Relief Programs to Expire

If the coronavirus pandemic response has left you short on paying your bills, one utility company is urging its customers to act now before special virus relief programs run out.

"As the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic start to subside, Pacific Gas & Electric Company reminds customers with past-due balances to explore available financial-assistance programs now, before the customer protections put in place during the pandemic end on June 30," the company said in an April 9 news release.

Among the virus relief programs is suspending disconnections for customers that fall behind on their bills.

Readers should call (800) 743-5000 today if you have an outstanding balance. "We have been working with customers with past-due balances for more than a year," the company said, "and will continue these efforts months after the protections expire. PG&E will not initiate disconnections immediately after the protections end."

The relief protections have been in place since March 2020 when the pandemic started in the U.S. So far some 1.6 million payment plans have been reached between PG&E and its customers, which include gas and electric service in much of Northern California but just electricity in SLO County, where SoCal Gas Co., has the natural gas franchise.

PG&E said from February 2020 to February 2021 the number of residential customers with past-due balances has grown nearly 30%.

PG&E said it will continue to try and reach customers with over due bills focusing on the looming expiration date for the relief programs, and "helping customers understand the status of their account, offering helpful resources and enabling customers to stay current through ongoing support and financial assistance programs."

PG&E submitted its plan to the California Public Utilities Commission in early April for its consideration and approval. "Proactive contact with customers during the pandemic has saved customers more than \$5 million just by changing their rate plan," the company claimed.

For more information about PG&E's pandemic assistance programs, see: [www.pge.com/covid-19](http://www.pge.com/covid-19).

To register for the vaccine, and for updates on COVID-19 in SLO County, see: [www.readySLO.org](http://www.readySLO.org) or call the Public Health Information Line at (805) 788-2903. A staffed phone assistance center is at (805) 543-2444 and available Mondays-Fridays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

COVID Gear Stolen

County officials are investigating a burglary where the thieves made off with several boxes of medical supplies needed for the County's Coronavirus testing site in Nipomo.

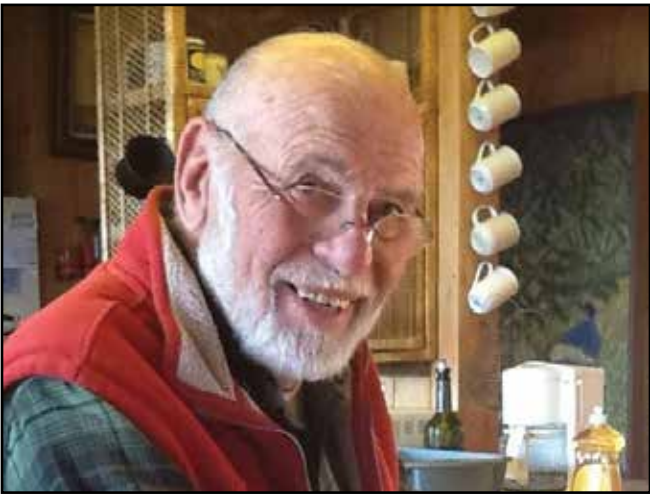
According to the County Health Department in an April 9 news release, sometime over the Easter Weekend (April 3-4), someone broke into the County's COVID 19 testing facility at the Nipomo Community Center and stole "thousands of dollars' worth of personal protective equipment [PPE] delivered on Friday, April 2." The theft was discovered the following Monday, the County said. The testing site was closed over the weekend.

Stolen items included a case of hand sanitizer, several boxes of surgical masks, and a case of N95 masks, gloves, gowns and cleaning or sanitizing items," according to the County.

If anyone has information that can help solve this crime, call Crime Stoppers at (805) 549-STOP (7867).

Arrest Made in Oceano Man's Murder

By Neil Farrell



Lawrence Albert Bross, 90 of Oceano, was killed in 2019.

A Grover Beach man has been arrested and charged with a homicide in the 2019 murder of an elderly Oceano man who was killed inside his own home.

On April 9, Sheriff Ian Parkinson announced the arrest of a suspect in the Jan. 24, 2019 murder of Lawrence Albert Bross, 90 of Oceano.

The suspect was identified as 41-year-old David James Krause of Grover Beach, a man who came under suspicion since shortly after the murder.

On Jan. 24, 2019, Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to check the welfare of at a home in the 1400 block of Strand Way, Oceano, according to a news release from Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla.

"When deputies arrived, they discovered the body of Bross inside the home," Cipolla said. "After an extensive investigation, detectives were able to identify Krause as the suspect in this case."

According to a March 2019 update, the Coroner's Office determined that Bross suffered "multiple chop force traumatic injuries," leading to his death, which early on was



Murder suspect David James Krause

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ruled a homicide.

In a series of updates from Cipolla following the original Jan. 24 “suspicious death” announcement, detectives first asked for the public’s help identifying a man who had been seen with Bross a few days before his murder.

They then asked for help finding a late model (over 15 years old) gray sedan their still unidentified suspect was suspected of driving at the time and asked for any video camera footage from Bross’ neighborhood.

After the Coroner’s announcement in March, the case fell off the news cycle but detectives continued to investigate and the trail led them to the County Jail.

Krause was actually in custody in County Jail on unrelated charges when detectives arrested him for suspicion of murder on April 8.

“We have very dedicated detectives,” said Sheriff Parkinson. “Through their perseverance, we are able to identify and arrest the person responsible for this heinous crime.”

Why’d it take so long to make an arrest? “This case involved significant laboratory follow-up,” Cipolla said, “which resulted in DNA, which clearly identified the suspect. This type of analysis is exceedingly detailed and extremely time-consuming, but the end result is the apprehension of a suspect.”

Solving Boss’ murder cleared the books on the six homicides committed in 2019 that the Sheriff’s Department investigated.

Three Re-appointed to VAC

Three members of the Visitor Alliance of Cayucos (VAC) have been reappointed to the board that decides on tourism promotions as part of the Countywide Business Improvement District or CBID, though it looks again like there won’t be much to promote again this summer.

The VAC in March unanimously voted to support the

reappointment of Toni LeGras, Carol Kramer and Richard Shannon. And County Supervisors on April 6 made it official.

Shannon is co-owner of On the Beach B&B; Kramer has the Sea Shanty Restaurant; and, LeGras has Beachside Rentals, Inc., a vacation rental management company. Each of the appointee’s term will now expire Jan. 31, 2023.

Also on the board is Melissa Kurry of SeeLyon Beach Rentals. The rest of the local tourism promotions team includes CBID’s executive director Cheryl Cummings, with Danielle DuBow administrator. Shirley Lyons is Cayucos’ representative on the Countywide CBID board and Danna Dykstra-Coy is VAC’s official photographer. Dykstra-Coy was awarded a new contract with the VAC at its March meeting.

The CBID is funded with a 2% tax tacked onto the cost of a room night at motels, hotels, B&Bs and vacation rentals in the unincorporated towns of SLO County — Cayucos, Cambria, and San Simeon being the biggest tourism towns. Each area has its own local board that gets half the taxes to spend on promotions and events in their towns.

Also in March, in a report from the Chamber of Commerce liaison, bad news about this summer emerged. “No events, no 4th of July,” the meeting minutes reported. “October and November would be the soonest things would be planned.” So there could be hope for a car show this year, which normally is held in early November and draws thousands of car buffs to town.

The Chamber is trying to get the Farmer’s Market — which starts Memorial Day Weekend in the Vet’s Hall parking lot — extended through October, too.

From the CBID report, “The new spring campaign is Hidden Gems of the Central Coast; open to discover; Open Beaches Everywhere; “You know you want to go” (getting people over the post-COVID travel guilt); We welcome you with open arms.

“January was soft; February should be better. Now that we are in the red tier, more things will be opening up. CBID has published new content and is running a test LFA imperative for Cayucos for social ads.”

Lights Out

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



A driver flew through the South Bay Boulevard and Los Osos Valley Road on April 10 and took out the two traffic control boxes and a fire hydrant.

The traffic boxes were sheared off at the slab damaging the wires.

“It was hit so hard that it damaged the underground wiring that was connected to the box,” SLO County Public Works Deputy Director John Waddell said adding that workers planned to be on the job through the weekend if needed. “It completely destroyed the cabinet and everything in it. We were able to source all the parts, but the wiring is the biggest impact.”

The fire hydrant was also sheared off, but the auto shut-off valve engaged and stopped the water from running out and down the street.

For nearly the last two weeks, one of the highest traffic intersections went old school and drivers had to adapt to multiple stop signs to control traffic at the four-way light. Repairs are expected to be done, post press time, on April 22.

Community Outreach Day & Compost Giveaway

A green waste bin can equal a cleaner, greener San Luis Obispo County and organic compost for you

Every handful of kitchen, yard, and lawn waste you put into your green recycling bin helps create a greener, cleaner community, and it creates rich, organic compost during the recycling process at Kompogas SLO, the state-of-the-art green waste recycling facility in San Luis Obispo.


Kompogas SLO will hold a Community Outreach Day & Compost Giveaway on Saturday, April 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. where folks can pick up a free load of this organic compost to use for home gardening and landscaping projects.

How it Works

1. Stop by any time during the event’s open hours — no reservation or sign-up needed.
2. Bring your pickup truck or small trailer for your free organic compost.
3. Follow the directions of staff wearing safety vests.
4. They’ll load the compost for you.
5. After you’re loaded, brush off any loose materials and tarp your load in order to continue to be good neighbors to the community and keep the compost within the facility.
6. Enjoy your compost at home and start seeing the benefits of this great soil amendment for your gardening projects.

Kompogas SLO is located at 4300 Old Santa Fe Road in San Luis Obispo.

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Police Blotter



Morro Bay Police Logs

- **April 11:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 11 p.m. in the 1000 block of Quintana. The 25-year-old model citizen was arrested for suspicion of possessing drugs and paraphernalia, and being higher than the stacks on drugs. She went straight to jail and didn't pass "GO."
- **April 11:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 10 p.m. at Main and Atascadero Road. Logs indicated the 18-year-old scofflaw had a warrant and was naturally given a second and released.
- **April 11:** Police responded to a home in the 500 block of Kings for a burglary report. No word on what treasures were snatched.
- **April 11:** Police responded to an RV Park the 1700 block of Embarcadero for a report of a stolen Moped, no doubt bikers.
- **April 11:** Police contacted a wanted fellow, 28, at 9:15 a.m. in the 600 block of Quintana who had a warrant. He was issued a second piece of paper and released to catch again another day.
- **April 10:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:30 p.m. in the 900 block of Main. Logs indicated the driver, 20, was arrested for suspicion of driving butt-toasted.
- **April 10:** At 4:22 p.m. police stopped a suspicious vehicle at Main and Bayshore Drive, suspecting the driver was schnoekered. The driver was actually sober or at least not drunk enough to arrest, and so they threw that one back.
- **April 10:** Police responded to the 1000 block of Market for a report of "penetration with a foreign object," which is what they ought do to the fiend.
- **April 9:** Police responded at 1:30 p.m. to a car crash on private property in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd. They cited a 27-year-old fellow for a suspended license, so the crash is apparently his fault.
- **April 9:** Police pulled over a vehicle at 8:20 a.m. in the 1200 block of Main for a code violation. Logs indicated the driver refused to sign the ticket, because if you ignore unpleasantness, it doesn't exist, right.
- **April 8:** Police referred a 62-year-old man on Quintana Road to Adult Protective Services.
- **April 8:** Police responded at 10:30 a.m. to the 900 block of Balboa where someone stole something off some truck.
- **April 7:** Police responded at 2:20 p.m. to a disturbance in the 700 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated a 40-year-old zhluv was cast into irons for allegedly being wacked out on drugs.
- **April 7:** At 7:19 a.m. someone turned in a wallet and papers they'd found in Cayucos off Old Creek Road. At 8:19 a.m. someone turned in a wallet they'd found elsewhere.
- **April 6:** Police responded to the 300 block of MBB for a reported shoplifting case. Police are hunting the scoundrel.

- **April 6:** Police are investigating a reported domestic battery in the 3300 block of Panorama Dr.
- **April 6:** Police responded at 12:19 p.m. to the UPS Store in the 600 block of Quintana where a woman tried to ship 4 pounds of the weed to someone in another state, a nice gesture to be sure, but maybe next time go FedEx.
- **April 6:** Police responded at 10:35 a.m. to a disturbance in the 2800 block of Main. A 61-year-old Bust-a-fooligan was nicked for being drunk in public.
- **April 6:** Someone vandalized an innocent car in the 3100 block of Main.
- **April 6:** According to logs, police responded at 6:38 a.m. to a vandalism at Main and Java. A 38-year-old misbegotten knave was arrested for suspicion of vandalism and taken to County Jail. Again, according to logs, the same guy was arrested again at 7:18 a.m. in the 200 block of Dunes for allegedly trying to steal items in a car by boosting the whole car. Ol' Hood-dini was booked again, as apparently the first time didn't take.
- **April 6:** Police contacted a 40-year-old man apparently creating a disturbance at 3:19 a.m. in the 300 block of Shasta. The bent fellow was arrested for allegedly being high on drugs.
- **April 5:** Police contacted a regular customer at 6 p.m. in the 1900 block of Sunset. The 28-year-old shoo-fly had a warrant and was given a second summons to add to his collection.
- **April 5:** Police responded to a disturbance at 3 p.m. in the 300 block of Pico. A 58-year-old raucous fellow was arrested for public intoxication and taken to the hospital, "because of his level of intoxication and altered state," a case of havin' way too much fun.
- **April 5:** Two cars collided at 11:45 a.m. in the 2600 block of Main. No juicy details to relay, sorry.
- **April 5:** Someone got into a vehicle parked in the 300 block of Avalon. Police have no clue as to who but perhaps you do?
- **April 4:** Police responded to the 3000 block of Beachcomber Dr., for a residential burglary. No word on what booty got pinched.
- **April 4:** Police responded to a disturbance at 3 p.m. in the 900 block of Main where a 40-year-old woman was apparently having a bag lady moment. She was nicked for suspicion of being blotto in public and was checked into the gaol.
- **April 4:** Police responded to yet another squit who can't hold his liquor at 1:37 p.m. in City Park. The 46-year-old fellow was arrested for suspicion of being too drunk not to arrest. That same swamp donkey was also cited April 1 in City Park for allegedly possessing a crack pipe.
- **April 4:** Police got the 9-1-1 to proceed to 911 Morro Bay Blvd., for an unwelcomed fellow causing a ruckus. The gas station folks asked that the 63-year-old dingus be charged with trespassing. He was cited and released and that'll sure show 'em.
- **April 4:** Someone turned in one Ford key/fob, one plain key, and miscellaneous key chains they found somewhere on Atascadero Road, apparently on the island of lost junk.
- **April 3:** Police contacted a familiar fellow, 43, at 12:19 p.m. in the 200 block of Harbor who had an outstanding invite from the judge. He was issued a second disappearance ticket and released.
- **April 3:** Police responded at 10 a.m. to the 1000 block of Front St., where some scalawag broke into the live crab tank outside Giovanni's Fish Market over night and left with crabs for his trouble. The thief used bolt cutters to get into the tank and gathered several delectable crustaceans, who no doubt mistakenly thought it was a jailbreak but alas, they won't escape their rather bleak futures.
- **April 3:** Police responded to the corner of Main and Atascadero Road for an accident on public property. They took a bicycle for safekeeping and documented the incident for the lawsuit to follow.
- **April 3:** Police were called at 7 a.m. to the 800 block of Main where someone parked their car in front of a driveway, a hanging offense in some parts, (you laugh, but people have died for less!).
- **April 3:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the suspect hour of 2:30 a.m. at Yerba Buena and Main. The driver, 31, got nicked for suspicion of driving toasty and went to

- the County B&B.
- **April 2:** Police responded at 5:12 p.m. to the high school where someone fell and landed in a potential lawsuit.
  - **April 2:** Police spotted a familiar face at 4:30 p.m. on Main at Bonita causing a disturbance. The 40-year-old tomato was allegedly stewed in public and got nicked.
  - **April 2:** Police took a petty theft report at a store in the 500 block of Embarcadero.
  - **April 2:** Police responded to the 600 block of Embarcadero for a report of a stolen check. Logs indicated the sticky-fingered swine was caught by Grover Beach Police.
  - **April 2:** Police responded to the 2200 block of Hemlock for a report of an altered check, a.k.a. fraud.
  - **April 1:** Someone turned in a wallet they'd found somewhere on Quintana Road. A couple of hours later they discovered a stolen vehicle parked at City Park on Harbor Street, "and the caze is sol-ved!"
  - **April 1:** At 4:45 p.m. police stopped some fool driving suspiciously at Main and Radcliff. The Slapdash fooliot, 20, was arrested for suspicion of driving with beer goggles on.
  - **April 1:** Someone found an Apple Watch on the beach by the lifeguard tower in the Rock parking lot.
  - **March 31:** Police responded at midnight to the 2700 block of Juniper for a reported assault. The victim signed a citizen's arrest form and police cited and released the assailing ruffian, with his no doubt solemn promise to appear in court.
  - **March 31:** Police responded at 9:35 p.m. to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated they tried to arrest the louse and he allegedly resisted. The idgit was on parole too, and got violated.
  - **March 31:** Police responded at 11:10 a.m. to the 1700 block of Embarcadero where a woman said some no doubt diabolical master criminal pilfered the front license plate off her 2018 Dodge Ram 1500 pick-up, no word on whether a task force was formed.
  - **March 31:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11 a.m. at the top of the world in the 1300 block of Clarabelle. The fellow driving, 34, was arrested for suspicion of resisting arrest, a suspended license, expired registration, elder abuse and being schwasted on drugs, which explains a lot.
  - **March 31:** Police responded at 10:16 a.m. for an assault report in the 900 block of MBB. A 42-year-old lady said that she was battered on March 29 in Santa Maria.
  - **March 31:** Police contacted a 36-year-old suspicious fellow at 2 a.m. in the 1000 block of Front St. The role model was arrested for allegedly possessing a crack pipe, his stash no doubt already up in smoke.
  - **March 31:** Police responded at 1:10 a.m. to the 1200 block of Berwick Dr., where a citizen said some anarchist threw a rock through his or her front window, a apparent a case for homeland security.
  - **March 30:** Ya mon, stum-body foun' de wallet on Jamaica Street, mon.
  - **March 30:** Police responded to the 1200 block of Embarcadero where someone broke open a fish storage container and made off with some fish. Ah, theft, the preferred method of fishing for lazybones.
  - **March 30:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:05 a.m. foolishly driving Downtown at Harbor and Main. A 30-year-old woman was nicked for driving overloaded.
  - **March 29:** Police responded at 2:17 p.m. to a medical crisis in the 1200 block of Scott St. Logs indicated some poor fellow was taken to the hospital on a medical and mental health emergency and left in the care of the ER.
  - **March 29:** At 12:10 p.m. police were called to the 900 block of Allesandro where someone else was having a bit of a breakdown.
  - **March 29:** Police were called at 10 a.m. to the Mobil Gas Station at the Roundabout where some agitated fellow was going wooley-booger and vandalizing station property. The management asked that he be cited for trespassing, charged with vandalism and then run off the property.

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Community

Reporting the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

By Jill Turnbow



Tom Cochrun’s career has gone from radio news announcer to award-winning documentaries with quite a few dangerous situations in between. This photo, taken in Alaska, is from a calmer time while he engaged in his passion for photography.

Cambrian Tom Cochrun is a kind and gentle spirit, gracious and quick with a laugh. But get to know him and you’ll find a man that has seen and heard it all; a man who has dug deep to find the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Tom began his career in radio broadcasting in Indiana, both as a news announcer and an afternoon DJ. And in 1969 when Tom married his artist wife, Lana, they traveled to Europe for four months.

“I had to get someone to cover my shifts at the radio station,” says Tom. He called on his friend from Ball State to take over. An announcer named David Letterman. “Look what I did for that guy,” Tom jokes.

Radio then led him into television, first as a field reporter, then filling the anchor position at a major television station in Indianapolis. He also appeared as the co-anchor of a nationally syndicated program called PM Magazine.

But Tom missed covering the hard news. At the age of 50, he left television and teamed up with a partner, a special agent with the FBI, to form a production company making films for cable channels, particularly the Discovery Channel, the Travel Channel, Lifetime and TLC. These stories took Tom around the world and into some fascinating yet dangerous situations.

“I’ve had my car fire-bombed– twice.” says Tom. And he survived a home invasion. “Apparently, you shouldn’t mess with the Teamsters,” he added.

In 1977, Tom covered the Tony Kiritsis story in Indi-

anapolis, leading to a documentary about the ordeal. Mr. Kiritsis, enraged by a mortgage banker, wired a shotgun to the banker’s head and marched him down the street.

“It was the first time the FBI brought in a behavioral modification negotiator to resolve a situation,” says Tom. His film, Dead Man’s Line, documents the three-day hostage crisis in which Kiritsis was able to hold the media hostage as well.

Tom has interviewed the Imperial Wizard of the KKK, which led to an Emmy-winning film, The Klan. He has covered the Iran-Contra affair, the cultural war in Nicaragua, and been held at knifepoint in Somalia. “I was bullet-proof in those days.”

Shooting a documentary for the Travel Channel, Tom traveled with a South African group of educators who were using puppets to teach rural tribesmen about the dangers of AIDS. “At that time, it was an unspeakable subject.”

As Tom was considering retirement, LIN Broadcast- ing tapped him to be news director for their CBS News affiliates. He helped local stations move into the digital world. “There’s so much more you can do these days as an investigative journalist with a computer. You don’t have to put yourself in a lot of dangerous situations.”

After retiring to Cambria in 2007, Tom was induct- ed into the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame. He has also published two thrillers, “The Sanibel Arcanum” and “The Sanibel Cayman Disc.”

Today you can find Tom enjoying his retirement on the tennis court and indulging in his passion for photography. He and Lana also love having their daughters and grandkids close by. Tom adds, “I also still find time to sit and write, but without a deadline. Now my computer can take me all over the world.”

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



**Looking for a fun outdoor activity to do with friends or family?** Participate in the Central Coast State Park Association’s California Native Wildflower Scaven- ger Hunt. Print out the wildflower sheet at <https://bit.ly/3tslKHa>.

ly/3tslKHa. Explore local parks and trails to find the wild- flowers. Use your favorite identifications tools or purchase “Wildflowers of San Luis Obispo County” at the CCSPA online store. Don’t forget to leave flowers where they are so that others can enjoy them. Share your pictures of what you found on social media and tag the CCSPA or email them to [programs@centralcoastparks.org](mailto:programs@centralcoastparks.org).



**Studios on the Park**, 1130 Pine St, Paso Robles, is fea- turing an exhibition comprised fully of sculpture, including work by locals Ron Roundy and Larry Le Brane,, through May 3. CaliforniaAesthetic3D is a celebration of the Cal- ifornia spirit though sculpture created with elements of wood, stone, metal and glass.

In this exhibition, curated by wood sculptor Ken Wilbanks and glass artist Stephanie Wilbanks, California’s artists share their vision of the fascinating CA Aesthetic. “Aesthetic dwells in study of the mind and emotions as they relate to the sense of artistic beauty.” said Ken Wilbanks.

Events Continued on page 10

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# Community

Events From page 9

The works are created by the artist to provoke a response, yet the viewer judges each piece through their own unique perceptions of meaning, sensation and artistry.”

The sculptors include Carl Berney, Peter Charles, Mecki Heussen, George Jercich, Larry Le Brane, Ron Roundy and Ken Wilbanks. All are from the Central Coast, and each has an impressive art background of their own, bringing a variety of sculpture to one creative space.

CaliforniaAesthetic3D can be seen Sunday through Thursday from 12 - 4 p.m. and on Friday and Saturday from 12 - 9 p.m.. For more information on CaliforniaAesthetic3D, Studios on the Park or its education programs, go to: [studiosonthepark.org/events/californiaaesthetic3d/](https://studiosonthepark.org/events/californiaaesthetic3d/). Pictured: sculpture by Ron Roundy



**Spring is here, and it’s time for some serious gardening.** Find unique, drought-tolerant plants that are perfect for your yard. Join us at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden for their annual Spring Plant Sale. This fundraising event will be held outdoors, next to the gift shop on Friday, April 30th through Sunday, May 2nd, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday’s sale is reserved for Garden Members only who will receive an additional 15% off! Saturday and Sunday are public shopping days. Garden admission is free on Saturday and Sunday during the Plant Sale (a \$5 value). Be sure to wander through our Garden to get inspiration for your own landscaping!

Details and plant list available at [slobg.org](https://slobg.org).

...

**It has been a year since many families and friends** have been able to have closure to the loss of loved ones. With the gradual opening up of our region, a joint action is taking place, as two congregations in Morro Bay – Rock Harbor Christian Fellowship (RHCF) and the Church of Christ (CoC) are teaming up to offer a thirteen-week grief support group, which will begin Monday, May 3 through August 2, with Memorial Day on May 31, dark.

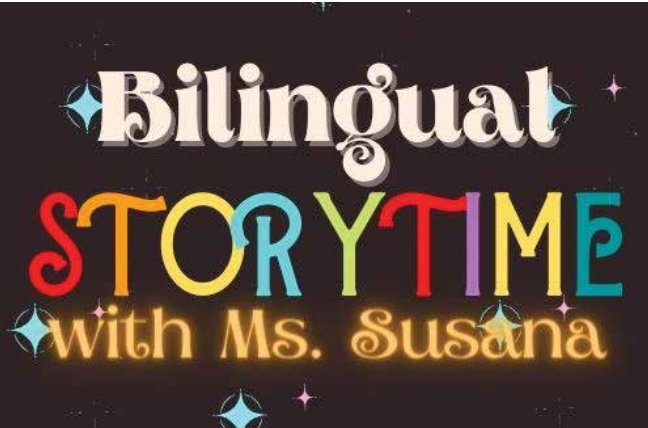
The free support group goes from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Social distancing will be practiced. The group meets at RHCF located at 1475 Quintana Road, Morro Bay. The support group will consist of a video presentation, workbook activities and group discussion.

Those facilitating will be Randy Ponder, chaplain for the Morro Bay Police Department and David and Vicki Ryal, facilitators of GriefShare. Ponder and D Ryal also serve as ministers of their respective congregations.

“This is a faith-based program, that incorporates a lot of information that deals with grieving the loss of a loved one,” said Ryal, who with his wife have conducted the program multiple times. Topics include: Grief and Relationships; Challenges of Grief; Guilt and Anger; and Getting Stuck in Grief. Discussions cover subjects like loss of a child, spouse and other family members, suicide, long-term illness and caregiving before loss, sudden loss and the like.

“Coming out of the pandemic is giving the faith community an opportunity to come together in concert to help our community in unity,” said Ponder. “The support group is open to all in the community.”

To reserve a spot or for more information, call RHCF at 805-772-7365 or email [randy@rockharborcf.com](mailto:randy@rockharborcf.com).



**Join Ms. Susana from the County of San Luis Obispo** Public Library for a bilingual storytime in celebration of Día de los niños / día de los libros 2021 via zoom on April 30 at 10:30 a.m. Families can read books and sing songs in this bilingual, interactive storytime. Register at <https://bit.ly/3tShPu>.



**Do you enjoy supporting local artists?** Be a part of San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden’s Art in the Garden Art Show and Fundraiser. This free, in-person event will be held at the Oak Glen Pavilion at the Garden April 30th - May 16th, Thursdays through Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. All art will be for sale and a portion of the sales will benefit San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden.

Art in the Garden is an annual event hosted by the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden as an opportunity to showcase local, high-quality original art and gather in their open and safe outdoor grounds and gardens. This event runs for 2 weeks, and is jam-packed with colorful glass work, paintings, pottery, succulent arrangements, exquisite jewelry design, photography and more – from 15 local artists! Come see our artist demonstrations on Saturdays and some Sundays from 12-4 p.m. This event draws people from all over this county and further to collect art, take in the natural flora and fauna of the garden and enjoy much needed respite.

Entry to the Garden is free on the first weekend, May 1st-2nd (normally a \$5 per person value) while the Spring Plant Sale is underway. For more information on the event or to view a list of the artists and artist demonstrators, please visit [slobg.org](https://slobg.org). Pictured is a bowl made by Ben Trogdon.



**Cal Poly’s annual Tomato Spectacular plant sale** is virtual this year, with online ordering continuing until mid-May or until plants are sold out.

Reservations will be required to pick up plants within

five days of purchase. Customers can select a time from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Tomato Spectacular offers more than 70 different types of tomato plants including Brandywine, Early Girl, Kellogg’s Breakfast, Homestead, and a selection of cherry tomato plants, including Nature’s Bites. The cost is \$6 per plant. To view this year’s catalogue, visit <https://polyplantshop.com/tomato-catalog-2021-pdf-download> to download a copy.

Plant varieties will be staggered throughout the sale, with inventory updated on Friday nights for purchase online starting the following day. Online ordering is available at [www.polyplantshop.com](https://www.polyplantshop.com).

Boxes will not be provided this year; customers should plan to bring their own containers if needed. When placing orders, customers will be prompted to provide a phone number and a time to pick up their orders in parking lot H-12, south of the Horse and Horticulture units on Via Carta Road off of Highland Drive. During pick up, customers are asked to wear a mask and to remain in the car. Plants will be delivered by students and staff.

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

## Energy Company Offers E-car Rebates

The local commercial energy provider is taking applications now for a new electric vehicle incentive program, offering rebates for customers to go electric with their wheels.

Central Coast Community Energy or 3CE, is offering its “Electrify Your Ride” program now through June 30. The program has a total of \$700,000 available in various amounts and for different types of e-vehicles.

Funding is on a first-come first-served basis and has three levels of eligibility — residential customers, commercial-agricultural customers, and public agencies.

The program is broken into four types of electric vehicles — battery electric; plug-in hybrids; electric motorcycles; and, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

The battery and hybrid categories are good for new and used cars but the motorcycles and hydrogen cars are only for new vehicles.

Under the residential category, 3CE said only one \$2,000 award per household is allowed, with “income-qualified” customers receiving double — \$4,000. As for used vehicles, battery cars can get \$1,000 with low-income households eligible for \$2,000.

With hybrids, the base award is \$1,000 and \$2,000 for low income. Used could get you \$700 base or \$1,400 low income.

Electric motorcycle awards are \$300 base and \$600

**E-Car Rebates** Continued on page 11

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Obituary

William James Koser  
1949 - 2021



William James “Jim” Koser of Paso Robles, CA, passed away at his home February 12, 2021. He was 71.

Jim was born April 14, 1949, to parents William and Betty Koser and grew up in Albany, CA. He was a talented leather craftsman who enjoyed music, photography, humor, film, and baseball.

A dedicated, lifelong civil servant, Jim worked in the finance departments for the cities of Richmond and Alameda, CA. In late 1994, he accepted the position of Finance Director for the city of Morro Bay, where he worked until his retirement.

Jim had an affinity for Morro Bay — the natural beauty, the community, and especially the staff. Ethics were paramount to him and he valued his time as a member of the Rotary Club and serving on various committees.

An avid fan of the San Francisco Giants, Jim also coached both his sons’ little league baseball teams for a number of years and served on the league’s board.

Jim truly enjoyed spending time with his family, and later, walking his beloved dog “Buster”.

He will be remembered for his charitable work and the countless lives he touched with his respect, encouragement, and empathy.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Kathleen; two sons, Sean-Thomas and Brian James; sister Susan Lease; brother John Koser; and cherished extended family.

We will all miss “Gentleman Jim” so very much. At his request, there will be a Celebration of Life at Lake Tahoe when loved ones can gather safely.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his Honor to CAPSLO Adult Center in Paso Robles, or your local Little League baseball team.

Community

**E-Car Rebates** From page 10

low income. And with hydrogen vehicles it’s \$1,000 and \$2,000 respectively.

Residential customers can only get one award per household, but commercial and Ag customers can get up to five awards per business. Large and small commercial and agricultural customers and non-profit agencies are eligible.

As for the public agencies, they too gang het up to five incentive awards and if they wanted to try for more than that, they must do so in person. All cities and counties enrolled with 3CE are eligible to apply.

For more information and to apply for an award online, see: [www.3cenergy.org/electric-vehicle-incentive-program](http://www.3cenergy.org/electric-vehicle-incentive-program).

You can also email questions to 3CE at: [EA@3ce.org](mailto:EA@3ce.org) or call 888-909-6227.

3CE, formerly called Monterey Bay Community Power, is a non-profit company that provides electricity purchased off the grid and delivered via the existing utility lines, in our case via Pacific Gas & Electric’s distribution system. 3CE’s mission is to save customers some money and promote sustainable and carbon-free sources of electricity.

Participation is voluntary, however, after the Morro Bay City Council — along with most SLO County cities — approved joining 3CE, every customer was automatically transferred over from PG&E service.

Should Castle Wind be successful in building a 1,000-megawatt offshore wind energy farm, they have already agreed to sell that energy to 3CE.

A proposed 600 MW Battery Energy Storage System or BESS, being proposed by Vistra Energy for the Morro Bay Power Plant property, could also align itself with 3CE to store energy when wind and solar are plentiful, storing excess energy to stabilize the power grid and make so-called carbon-free energy more reliable.

The thread count on these sheets is not even fit for a dog

Follow Cat Noir CC on Facebook for daily photos and read the blog at CatNoirCC.com.  
Every Color Deserves a Forever Home

Spotlighting Another  
Local Author,  
Sue McGinty

By Judy Salamacha

**OUT & ABOUT**  
WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

The BookShelf Writers consist of four Estero Bay women who have been writing & critiquing together for over five years. For more samples of their work, please visit [www.thebookshelfwriters.com](http://www.thebookshelfwriters.com)

Each issue, this column will feature one of the BookShelf Writers:  
Debbie Block, Catherine “Kiki” Kornreich, Judy Salamacha and Susan Vasquez

Local mystery author Sue McGinty’s books can be found at Coalesce Book Store in Morro Bay, Volumes of Pleasure Book Shoppe in Los Osos, and Amazon.

Channeling Bella Kowalski comes naturally for mystery author, Sue McGinty. She shows up at book-signings, workshops and writer’s conferences disguised as a nun. Kowalski, the protagonist in her 5-book mystery series is a former nun. When she launched the first book in 2008, McGinty most likely heeded newbie-writer-advice, “Write what you know.” And although she was never a nun, she did time growing up in Catholic schools in the Detroit, Michigan area before serving a lifetime career as a technical writer for McGraw-Hill in Los Angeles. She retired to Los Osos.

“I like to walk in this gorgeous area and think how lucky I am to live on the Central Coast,” the author said.

It is no surprise McGinty titled and developed community specific SLO County settings for four of the Bella Kowalski Mystery series: “Murder in Los Lobos,” “Murder in Mariposa Bay,” “Murder at Cayamaca Beach” and “Murder at Smuggler’s Cove.” “Murder in a Safe Haven” transported Bella back to Detroit where in real time McGinty traveled to settle her mother’s estate. Of course, Bella found another mystery to solve at a familiar nunnery.

Linna Thomas, owner of Coalesce Book Store and Wedding Chapel, has always enjoyed the relationship with McGinty. “We have a locals’ section and encourage local writers to bring in their books for us to help sell,” she said. Regarding McGinty, she added, “Readers will find Sue’s books there with many other local writers, but we thought Sue’s work would sell equally as well in our new fiction section. Her books have a certain lure about them and sell themselves to locals and strangers. On a personal basis, Coalesce has published a few books and when I needed some editing help with an anthology on grief, Sue was instantly helpful. I like her so much and pleased to recommended her and her work for everyone to read.”

McGinty has currently taken a break from her Bella series. Her latest book published in 2019 is “The Sojourner Chronicles,” a coming of age novel that takes place in Detroit in 1943 during World War II. “I worked on this book for over ten years. I’m very interested in the World War II. It is an adult book although the protagonist is a teenager.”

Her WIP (work in progress) is another mystery, but more historically researched. It takes place in Nevada

Sue McGinty Continued on page 12

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Marriage Announcement  
Raymond and Janina  
4/12/2021



Photo by Dean Sullivan

“My love, I give you my hand!  
I give you my love more precious than money,  
I give you myself before preaching or law;  
Will you give me yourself? Will you come travel with me?  
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?”  
*Walt Whitman, Song of the Open Road*

**Sue McGinty** From page 11  
during the Cold War in 1963. Watch for it – “Murder at Area 51.”  
McGinty is an active member of the Central Coast Chapter of Sisters in Crime and SLO Nightwriters. For fun, she said, “I read other people’s novels. I love P.D. James and the Michael Connelly books, especially Bosch.”  
Sue McGinty’s books are available at Coalesce Book Store in Morro Bay, Volumes of Pleasure Book Shoppe in Los Osos, and Amazon.  
*Judy Salamacha is a member of The BookShelf Writers. To see more of her work, visit [www.thebookshelfwriters.com](http://www.thebookshelfwriters.com)*

Restoring Native Habitat



California State Parks environmental scientist Jodi Isaacs will present an online talk about restoring natural habitat on April 24.

**C**elebrate Earth Day with the SLO Botanical Garden. Join California State Parks Environmental Scientist Jodi Isaacs on Saturday, April 24 at 1 p.m. for an online talk about restoring the natural habitat in our local state parks. See how Morro Strand State Beach and Montana de Oro State Park have been transformed by replacing invasive plants with native species. Learn how invasive plants pose a threat to our native habitats on the Central Coast and how native habitat restoration can benefit wildlife and humans, alike.  
Isaacs has worked in the natural resource management field for over 30 years and currently works as an environmental scientist for California State Parks in Morro Bay where she dedicates much of her time to habitat conservation and restoration.  
Over the years Jodi has worked to restore riparian, grassland, oak woodland, and coastal scrub habitats throughout California. She completed her graduate work in Australia studying bird movements in a fragmented rainforest landscape and has worked studying birds in native and non-native habitats in Maui, Africa, Ecuador, and around California.  
There is a suggested donation of \$10 public/\$5 SLOBG members for tickets. Details are at [slobg.org](http://slobg.org).

Letters

To  
The Editor  
Letter Writer Got it Wrong



**D**id Mr. Martin (Estero Bay News 4/8/21) miss the point of Ms. Winholtz’s letter regarding the City’s poor stewardship of our urban forest?  
City residents, in 1989, sought to enhance our urban forest by becoming a Tree City, USA, a designation that has specific requirements for a tree ordinance, i.e. penalties for unpermitted removal of trees, valid reasons needed for removal and a program for replacement and new planting.  
As a Tree City, Morro Bay also earned related status as a bird sanctuary.  
The recent spate of unapproved tree removals - 50 trees cut down when only 25 were approved for the new sewer pipes entrenchment, 12 trees cut and poisoned at Bayshore Bluffs Park, other trees dubiously approved for cutting. The City has yet to pursue accountability and penalties per the law for illegal cutting.  
There seems to be a lack of City oversight regarding the tree ordinance at a time when other municipalities are planting trees as a means of mitigating the increasing temperatures and pollutants of climate change.  
Regarding the removal of 15 trees on Cerrito Place, “poor health” was the arborists’ language not “severe damage” as stated by Mr. Martin. The five thirty-year-old trees in the Right of Way were planted before the 2002 ordinance, so cannot have been “planted illegally.” It is worth noting, the City does not have a penalty for planting a tree. It isn’t fair to blame or name call the messenger for delivering a factual message that is uncomfortable to hear.  
An interesting March 2020 commentary in the Tribune cited an article from Science Magazine: “California’s urban canopy cover per capita is the lowest in the United States.” We must do better to protect and enhance our urban forest that provides habitat for wildlife and natural beauty for our wellbeing.

Nancy Bast  
Morro Bay

Lithium Battery Storage  
Plan, not the Right Place

**M**orro Bay’s city manager and council are considering one of world’s largest lithium storage facilities within a few blocks of a neighborhood where hundreds of people

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**Los Osos Rotary**  
will once again be holding an  
E-Cycling event at the  
Trinity United Methodist Church  
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are now living and near Morro Bay high school.

After doing my research on the subject, it is my opinion that downtown Morro Bay is not the right place to put a highly dangerous lithium-ion battery storage facility. I believe in Li-ion battery technology, but not a facility this large. The technical literature I have been reading states that a storage facility this large is still not a well-developed technology. There is currently not enough data and experience available to understand the possible implications of this site.

The State of Arizona near Phoenix had a lithium-ion battery fire. When first responders opened the door to the enclosure, it exploded sending several of them to the hospital. The manufacturer claims, after the investigation that it was a great learning experience, this is how they get information for the next generation.

There were at least 23 South Korean plants that caught fire including South Korea’s Chungnam Solar Station. In China an electric bus exploded due to a faulty battery. There was a lithium-ion battery explosion on board a diesel-electric ferry In Norway.

The module design is a good one, but it may have its problems too. Li-ion batteries are very sensitive to mechanical damage and water, which could lead to battery explosions and fires. This facility will be near earthquake faults. If and when a tsunami hits this area, we are all in trouble. Remember, the decision was made to move our sewer system because of a possible tsunami. This storage facility is at the same sea level as our former sewer plant.

Also, the chemicals used in Li-ion batteries are known by the state of California to cause cancer and birth defects.

I am not against the project, but because of the dangers inherent in the currently proposed location, it should be located at a safer facility, perhaps at the Diablo Canyon plant. The plant at Moss Landing is probably safe because it is not in a neighborhood (it is required to be a mile away from any residents). With local groups throughout California concerned about climate change and ocean rise, I don’t understand why these groups are not actively fighting this Morro Bay location.

Garry Johnson  
Morro Bay

## Gas Tax Should Maintain Freeways

I am an antique road and street map collector from E-bay and the former www.20centurymaps.com, as well as a Facebook group member of the Freeways of Los Angeles Facebook group. I have been doing my research into the development of the Los Angeles freeway system covering Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. My concern is how California highways and freeways are being maintained, with the widening of Interstate 5 (Old U.S. 6 & 99) Golden State Freeway and Interstate 5 (Old U.S. 101) Santa Ana Freeway as well as the future widening of Interstate 605 San Gabriel River Freeway from Interstate 5 to Interstate 10 (Old U.S. 60, 70, 99) San Bernardino Freeway with HOV lanes and 5 lanes in the northbound and southbound lanes.

With the SB-1 gasoline tax funds it is time that our 60 to 70+ old freeways are maintained on a regular basis over a period of time without spending the money on something else that is not freeway and highway related. My parents are Automobile Club of Southern California members since the year of 1981, and my research is within Caltrans different districts on the Internet.

Scott C. Presnal  
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



## The Natural World A Really Green Road Trip

By Ruth Ann Angus



The view at Sea Canyon.

Grab your bicycle, get your helmet on, and let’s pedal through a section of our county reverently referred to as the Irish Hills.

Going green is popular now and it helps make less of an impact on our environment, but for those of you who cannot manage a bicycle adventure, this tour is just as much fun by car.

We start at Prefumo Canyon Road in San Luis Obispo. As you turn onto it from Los Osos Valley Road, you’ll pass some condos, but in a matter of minutes, you are out of town and into a lovely oak tree-shaded wilderness. Immediately you will notice the quiet and solitude. As you start up the incline, you might see turkey vultures soaring overhead on thermals. Watch out for deer that could be browsing in the roadside vegetation.

For bicyclers it is a steady and winding climb up Prefumo Canyon. You will definitely get your exercise. For those driving, be courteous and go slowly and share the road with your cyclist friends.

Gaining some elevation will bring you into an area of open rangeland. Here the hills are carpeted in velvet green grass thanks to the winter rains. It’s spring and there likely are wildflowers, such as poppies, lupines, and little yellow buttercups. Off to your left, due southeast is 1223 foot Mine Mountain. Was this the location of a long ago mining operation? That certainly would account for the name.

Keep pedaling to reach the summit and take a rest break nearby the old rustic barn on the left. This is one of the only wide places on the road, so for automobile travelers, it is a good place to pull over and get out and stretch your legs.

From this point you can see 1359 foot Stony Peak to the west as well as an enormous panoramic view from the coastal ridge to the north all the way to Morro Rock and the Ocean, and on a very clear day way beyond. Hollister Peak at 1404 feet pokes its head up in the distance.

The ranch you are taking your rest break by is one of the original 1880 settlements of the canyon. At that time this was a dairy cow farm. It has also housed a herd of longhorn cattle. This is open rangeland so beware as you are almost sure to meet cattle, possibly right on road. Small herds of crossbred Angus and Hereford cows and calves and an occasional bull could greet you as you top the grade and start down the other side, now called See Canyon Road. Best advice is, if you don’t bother them, they won’t bother you.

See Canyon is named after 1800s settler Joseph See, who was the first to plant apple trees here. It is thought to be named after the creators of See’s Candies, but there is no proof that the family of Joseph See was related to the family of Charles See, the true originator of that candy empire.

Apples are See Canyon’s claim to fame. The Canyon rests in a small microclimate that is favorable for growing a variety of apples. Long winter cold spells bring a successful flowering season and warm summer days produce excellent fruit.

You will travel adjacent to sycamore-lined See Canyon Creek, past the family owned orchards that grow heirloom and organic apples. At this time of year the orchards are probably closed but you will see their beautiful white and pink flowered trees.

After passing the last orchard on the road you will



A bicyclist on Prefumo Canyon Road

## Help Wanted

Bayside Cafe is in need of dishwashers. No experience necessary just good working with others. Apply in person only during the day from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Night shifts needed only: 3:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

The Inn at Morro Bay is seeking candidates for the following positions:

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Road Trip Continued on page 15



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



KEVIN O'CONNOR, President



artworks — succulent plants grouped into living wall treatments. Identifications are checked at the front desk.

Beyond a set of security doors the interior is split in two with different types of marijuana and hemp products featured in each side. The interior walls are decorated with huge enlargements of beautiful photos taken of local scenes.

It gives off the feel of a high-end jewelry store with all the products in glass cases and so-called “budtenders” serving customers like jewelry store sales clerks.

Rebecca Oribello, nhc’s marketing associate said, “We’ve been using Nick Reed, R3B Corp., for all our new projects. Nhc invested over \$1 million in the remodel of the Morro Bay location, which took about three and a half months. We will also have over 20 employees at that location.”

She explained that the store will have a full line of CBD products, as well as the marijuana buds and vape pens. “We’ll carry the CBD products you mentioned — lotions, tinctures, balms, edibles, etc., that have little to no psychoactive effects along with THC products for recreational users.” The store will carry over 1,500 products.

Joe Armendariz, nhc’s director of governmental affairs said, “Part of nhc’s vision as a company is operating high-end, world class dispensaries that provide a comfortable and classy atmosphere and friendly service. Our Morro Bay store will continue this tradition while partnering with the city to provide substantial community benefits including new local jobs and tax revenue.”

Company owner, Helios Dayspring, reportedly grew up in Morro Bay and Oribello added that nhc, “Will be the only locally owned and operated dispensary in Morro Bay.”

Morro Bay’s other dispensary, Perfect Union, located at 1000 Quintana Rd., opened last October. The city’s marijuana ordinance allows for just two within the city limits. Perfect Union is headquartered in Sacramento and has several stores in California and beyond.

Police Chief Jody Cox was on hand at the opening. He acknowledged that the department has been involved with nhc through the process of remodeling to ensure that the proper security measures are in place. Such requirements are included in the City’s cannabis ordinance.

Nhc’s opening comes as the City’s Measure E-20 sales tax, passed last November, takes effect April 1 and will impact the City’s revenues in the next fiscal year that starts July 1.

The City Council voted to levy a 5% tax on all marijuana products, which comes on top of the City’s two local sales tax measures — Measure Q at 0.5% and E-20’s 1%.

Oribello said the latest tax figures have nhc as the No. 1 tax revenue generator in Grover Beach. “It’s been the Vons for years but we’re now the top contributor,” she said.

Morro Bay City Manager Scott Collins said they were working on revenue projections from the City’s cannabis tax. “With both Perfect Union and Natural Healing Center being open now,” he said, “I think somewhere between \$375,000 to \$475,000 per year, but we are still working the numbers.”

So the boost in sales taxes that will come from the store’s opening, will come to the City as it tries to dig itself out of the revenue hole it fell into with the coronavirus pandemic response that went into effect in March 2020 and continues today.

The revenue losses from closed or greatly restricted businesses like restaurants, retail stores and even motels for several months as well, forced the City to essentially cancel its recreation classes and youth sports offerings, laying off over 70 part time employees.

Some of the exercise classes have been moved outdoors but youth sports and the teen center have not returned.

City employees, even management and the City Council, took pay cuts and literally, every department in the City felt the COVID contraction to its budget.

A comprehensive plan was hatched to carry the City through the pandemic that mostly involved layoffs and spending down the reserves.

With the two pot stores now open and generating tax dollars, plus a potential windfall of nearly a half million dollars from a potential battery facility being proposed at the Morro Bay Power Plant, the City’s outlook should be much rosier very soon.

Nhc’s Morro Bay store is open daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. To enter the store you’ll have to provide photo ID and you must be at least 21-years old. They also only take cash, and there is an ATM inside the store.

Bill Lee From page 1

John Lee, Bill’s son, said his dad fell in love with Baywood Park almost by chance. He said his father became interested in Baywood in 2001 when he visited the area while looking for a place for he and his second wife to live out their retirement.

“They wanted to move from Dana Point and traveled north,” John said, “not knowing where they would end up.”

He’d been to Los Osos in the mid-1990s to visit two of his sons who live here. The return trip in 2001, and a stay at the Back Bay Inn, made quite an impression.

He fell in love with the area, John explained, the nature, the bay, the waves, and the people, whom he admired for a lack of pretentiousness.

He settled into a quiet life tending a little farm and growing tomatoes. Then the Back Bay Inn came up for sale and John said his dad immediately wanted to buy it.

“He had no experience in the hospitality industry, but there was an emotional connection due to his stay there and he had a vision for what he could create on the property with his love of gardening.

“He knew that it was already a spectacular spot, but he saw it as something that he could put his energy into and make it even more beautiful for the community and the people that stay there.”

Over time, other properties came up for sale or lease and he saw it as an opportunity to expand the beautification he’d begun at the Inn. He rented a cottage at 3rd and El Moro, John said, and created a community garden space.

He also bought the former Don Julio’s Restaurant space, and remodeled it inside and out and opened The Blue Heron, bringing his vision of an elegant, farm-to-table style eatery, growing the vegetables himself on his farm — picked and served in the same day. He also picked up the Back Bay Café.

“His philosophy was not to get rich on Baywood,” John said, “it was to put his time, energy, and finances into making the place as special as he could because he thought that it was as worthy a location as you could find, and that the people in the community deserved it.”

Bill Lee’s father was a band leader and woodwind player in the Big Band Era of the 1930’s and ‘40’s, John said, and Bill carried the same musical genes, as have all four of his children.

Having regular live music and festivals on his properties was important to him, John said, “because he knew that music brings people together and he valued it in the community.”

Paul Irving, a local businessman, trumpet player with Zongo All Stars, and publisher of Big, Big SLO, a live

entertainment guide for SLO County, teamed up with Bill Lee in many of those musical offerings that have now been woven into Baywood’s fabric. It started with the Inn’s transformation into an outdoor concert venue.

“We christened that by hosting Oktoberfest 2007,” Irving said. “That was also the first live gig for Zongo All Stars.” That kicked off a musical relationship with Bill Lee.

“He was a very gracious host,” Irving said. “He made Baywood nice and accommodating, not just for tourists but for the whole community to enjoy.”

They also worked together on the “Beer at the Pier,” an outdoor concert series hosted by Lee’s Back Bay Café in the spring, summer and into the fall months (The shows moved across the street and indoors in winter).

The ultimate challenge arose when the Merrimaker came up for sale; he just couldn’t resist. The infamous corner bar that for years was hit with the label of “quintessential dive bar,” on Wikipedia was in need of some TLC.

“He put his energy towards fixing it up,” John Lee said, “with the idea of making it the best possible experience going forward for the community. He was proud that the people who worked on the renovation are Los Osos locals.”

John said his dad certainly was a transcendent figure in the real estate industry and, “he put the same amount of energy into Baywood as he did into Lee and Associates, the Real Estate company that he founded.”

John said his father was a loving and nurturing family man to his children and grandchildren. “He will be remembered for his generosity. He will be remembered for his faith. And he will be remembered in Baywood.”

Bill Lee is survived by his four children, Robb, John, Ryan, and Katie, and nine grandchildren.

Pipeline From page 1

the way to the Atascadero Road treatment plant.

The WRF project calls for installation of a series of pipes running from the old treatment plant site on Atascadero Road to the new WRF plant on the hill above the end of South Bay Blvd., over 3 miles and a few hundred feet in elevation. The direction of LS-3 will have to be re-routed to push the City’s sewage up to the new WRF plant.

To bypass LS-3, they installed an aboveground sewer pipe that runs parallel to Quintana Road. Mueller said they were in the process of placing barricades to protect it when they hit the line and punched a hole in it.

Mueller said that break was near LS-3 and the City crew responded and redirected the spilled sewage back down a sewer manhole.

He estimated about 1,100 gallons of sewage spilled and they were able to capture 650 gallons of it. Some of it absorbed into the ground.

“It did not make it to the bay or any waterway that leads to the bay,” Mueller said.

He said they called County Environmental Health and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The determination was made that it didn’t enter any waterway of the State, he said.

What about the “wetland” on the opposite side of Quintana from the lift station running parallel to the road? That was of great concern to the Coastal Commission when the condo project was under consideration.

Mueller said they consulted with the agencies and determined it was a drainage ditch and so concluded the sewage did not enter a waterway. Plus the spill was less than 500 gallons so wasn’t considered a “Class 1” spill, which could bring a hefty fine from the state.

Mueller said they planned to bill the company for the City crew’s time fixing the two pipe ruptures and cleaning up the messes, as they knew the marked water line was there and the sewer line is above ground.

Other than these day-1 incidents, Mueller said the job is progressing, with work started on two new lift stations — one on Main Street (LS-B) next to Lemos Ranch Pet Supply Store and the other at the City’s Corp Yard on Atascadero Road (LS-A).

He said the Main Street site is a challenge because it’s so small but work is going faster at the other site where room to work isn’t a factor. The Main Street lift station



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News

is supposed to be 30-feet underground, so a tremendous amount of dirt will have to be trucked and stored off site. Commenting on a recent burglary at the WRF site, where some \$150,000 worth of equipment was stolen, including some rented equipment, Mueller said it didn't slow them down much, as there were other areas of the project they shifted workers to. Travelers on Hwy 1 can take a glance at the WRF construction site on the South Bay highway bridge. You can now see a large steel building going up. Mueller said it's the operations building, and a little further back on the site tucked against the hillside and not visible from the highway, is the maintenance building, which is a little further along with construction. Work on the \$131 million WRF project started over a year ago with completion due by the end of 2023, under an order from the RWQCB.

Tiki Cruise From page 1

business entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism. Active membership in Cal Poly's Hot House, Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship [www.cie.calpoly.edu](http://www.cie.calpoly.edu) encouraged his drive to create three successful start-up businesses on the Central Coast. His first business was Red Anchor Charters out of Morro Bay. He still owns the yacht, but was sidetracked from bay cruising to focus on developing Reef Points Hard Cider with Cal Poly classmate and friend Patrick Martinez, cellar master for Niner Wine Estates. Dane was also distracted by a girl named Alexis, who managed Blue Sky Restaurant of Morro Bay for six years. Harbor-side, the restaurant was close to where the Red Anchor Charters docked. Their mutual attraction led to friendship, which led to business partnering and a wedding in March 2021. "I wouldn't be anywhere without her," said Dane. Meanwhile Cayucos-based Reef Points Hard Cider was making industry noise. The hand-to-bottle cider small business had grown to 268 accounts. Patrick was the production partner and Dane loved helping during production but focused on sales and marketing. They were positioned to grow, but a bank loan was denied. Dane had met Jeff Wade, [www.slowmoneyslo.org](http://www.slowmoneyslo.org), through the Cal Poly Hot House. Slow Money SLO is a nonprofit investor group interested in supporting established businesses in San Luis Obispo County's agriculture and sustainable farm-to-table industries in order to keep small business farming thriving in the area. Dane explained, "The group looks for owners whose minds are 'right,' food/ag related that have potential." Much like the television show Shark Tank, Reef Points was invited to present to the group and it was accepted to receive funding. Their business grew to 3,000 cases, was recognized as one of the top three hard ciders worldwide by Wine Enthusiasts Magazine and, when offered a buy-out, the partners sold the company and Dane headed back towards Morro Bay-side. "I love the sea and wanted back on the water," said Dane. "Lost Isles was for sale again from Thomas Pauly. I asked Alexis if I should buy it. She said I better do it this time." The timing had not been quite right the two prior times he had looked into ownership of the floating Tiki-Tour boat business. Dane also purchased a unique whale watching boat. "It rides low in the water so no one gets sea sick," he said. "Since it only accommodates six people at once it helped us weather Covid." Captain Dane says depending on the season they will see grey whales and humpbacks. "Lost Isle Adventures was already established," said Captain Dane, "but we grew it in 2019. Then 2020 hit and we've survived. Jeff (Wade) became much more than an investor for us. He's a friend. He helped us get the SBA loan to survive Covid and the PPE to continue business. It came back June 5, but we are still only at half capacity — when the weather is right." Wind and rain determine if they can tour the bay. Harbor cruises are 45-minutes and very affordable. Multiple YELP reviews recommend the entertaining bay

cruise to learn about the history of Morro Bay while tasting 1950s style tiki drinks. The boat also has a full bar. Dane says his favorite customers are the children. "I'm so grateful for all I have here (in Morro Bay) — what I've come through all these years. Being local I know a lot about the bay. I was in junior guards here and sailed for years, so I know a lot about the mammals, sea life and Morro Rock. I love to tell stories to the kids." He is confident being on the water learning about the bay and otters is more memorable than sitting at home on Zoom. "Kids love to be silly and they love to learn." This columnist hasn't experience Captain Dane's bay-dialogue, yet, but has no doubts Captain Dane is all about fun and enlightenment for both kids and adults. Give them a call to book a ride at (805) 771-9337.



Penned Cows by Joan Sullivan 1980.

Seeing cows munching in the green fields reminds me of the many roundups I've attended. It was related to me, from the wife of a rancher, that preparations for the occasion began weeks ahead of the scheduled event. After the roundup there is usually a get together for a feed. Feeding a dozen or more ranch hands and all the other attending parties is no minor chore. The food has to be prepared and deposited at the site ahead of the event. I've seen huge pots brought to the site where there was a house or campsite kitchen. In order to keep the food hot, it was necessary to keep the preparations on a stove ready to serve the hands. Other ranch wives would bring their own special dish that was planned ahead by the main ranch family. The work done by ranchers' wives was no less stressful than the roundup itself. Often more than 20 people showed up. Not all of them were workers. Some were looky loos. Rounding up the cattle that were strewn around the ranch could be very exciting. I was privy to help round up cattle on several occasions. Cattle are naturally fearful and follow their lead which is a horned cow. There are only one or two horned cows that keep order in a herd. Rounding up the cows to be penned can be exciting. It usually takes two or three ranchers to bring the herd to a pen where the calves are separated from the cows. If my old memory serves me right. A good herd is about 500 cows that has one or two bulls to keep the herd producing. It's a hard time for the calves and cows being separated from each other. But as one rancher related to me, "For their short life span, cows live a good life roaming the hills munching on grass. I know a bit more about cows now than I ever did before going on a roundup. The work that needs to be done to keep the herd safe and free from danger or sickness is another story for another day. Reference: *Rounding Up The Ranches* by Joan Sullivan 2015.

Road Trip From page 13



A peacock on the grounds at Kelsey Winery.

come to Kelsey Winery. If you brought a picnic with you this is a great place to stop and enjoy it at their tables in the garden behind the tasting room. Of course, a nice glass of one of Kelsey's vintages would go great along with your lunch. Some of the 130 peacocks that roam the grounds will probably join you. These large colorful birds spend their days wandering in and through the old vines located next to the garden. The canyon ends at San Luis Bay Drive. From here you can head into Avila Beach. Cyclists can take advantage of a section of the finished Bob Jones City to the Sea Trail that will take you past the Avila Beach Resort Golf Course and through a tidal estuary. Keep your eyes open for waterfowl like hooded mergansers, a variety of ducks, egrets and herons. Your road trip ends at Avila Beach where you can enjoy the beach, go for a swim, or fish off a pier, eat at fine dining establishments, book an ocean-going sportfishing trip, or go for an easy ocean kayak paddle. Whatever you choose, your green road trip is a wonderful way to spend a spring day in San Luis Obispo County.

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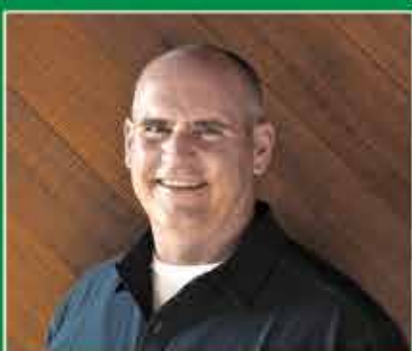
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