

Fire Chief to Retire After 38-year Career

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay Fire Chief Steve Knuckles got a taste of his future career not too long after he graduated from Atascadero High School. And now, some 38 years later, the eighth fire chief in the town's 56-year history, is ready to retire.

Estero Bay News sat down with the chief to reflect on his tenure in public safety and 22 years at MBFD. (It should be noted that in 1999, this reporter interviewed then-Capt. Knuckles, who had just been hired by Morro Bay, for the now defunct, Sun Bulletin Newspaper, introducing him to the community.)

He was introduced to firefighting by accident. He was hanging out with a friend from high school in July of 1982, he recalls. His friend was a reserve firefighter with Atascadero Fire Department. "Back then everyone carried pagers," Chief Knuckles, 56, says and also carried their PPEs [personal protection equipment] with them in their cars.

Suddenly the friend was paged to respond "to a large barn fire," Knuckles says. "I sat there and watched" the firefighters fight the blaze. "It looked like fun. I needed a job, so the following Tuesday I went to drill night and got my gear that night." That was Aug. 1, 1982. "I was skinny and had hair back then," he laughs.

He did a lot of different things for work, "from milking cows to selling auto parts," while attending Cuesta College and then Cal Poly.

At about 24, he figured out that he wanted to be a firefighter and by 25, he'd been hired full time by Atascadero F.D. Chief Michael Hicks hired him. "That's when I started my full time career," he says.

Already being a reservist at AFD helped a lot. Indeed being part of a reserve force has always helped people get hired on full time. "Joining the reserves gives you major bonus points," with getting hired, he says. "I have not hired anyone here or anywhere else who was not a reserve someplace."

The fire service is different today than when he started. "It is totally different today. They should call it an apprentice program. With the new state fire marshal standards and OSHA, you need



Morro Bay Fire Chief Steve Knuckles announced he would be retiring effective July 31 after some 38 years as a firefighter. Photo by Neil Farrell

hundreds of hours of training and it's pushed out the person who wants to do it as a community service."

Today, all the prospective firefighters are younger, college educated, or right out of the fire academy. It used to be that you could find experienced firefighter reserves. He noted that the late-Graham Pask, who was a reserve with MBFD for over a decade, was "one of the last community-based reserve firefighters. The whole state is that way."

Most large fire departments have already transitioned to a full, full-time staffing and Chief Knuckles believes Morro Bay will have to some day. "What's driving it is the costs," he says. "Full time firefighters are expensive. We will eventually have to go there. The cost for reserves is not productive."

So firefighter Knuckles toiled away with Atascadero F.D. for about 6 years and in 1999, he tested for an open captain's position in Morro Bay and got the job.

"May 1, 1999 I came to Morro Bay," Knuckles says. "I took the captain's test, did well and Fire Chief Jeff Jones hired me."

It was a rare job opening for the Morro Bay Fire Department, which only has four captains at a time. He replaced former Capt. Brian Miller, who left Morro Bay to go to medical school and Chief Knuckles says the last he heard, Dr. Miller was an emergency room surgeon on the East Coast. Capt. Miller left his

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MBHS Gets New Principal

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay High School has a new principal who is excited with his new challenge and happy to be making a homecoming of sorts.

Scott Schalde introduced himself to the students and parents in a letter included in the school's March 26 online newsletter. "Morro Bay High School," he said, "and the community it serves, are very special to me. I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve as the school's principal next year! I look forward to future opportunities to meet the families and students of our wonderful community."

Schalde said he's been a public educator for 26 years and has taught at various schools and in grades 7-12. "At the middle school level," he said, "I taught 7th-8th grade history, 7/8 English, 7/8 P.E., 7/8 AVID and several elective courses."

He taught at Morro Bay High, too. "I felt blessed to teach at MBHS for 6 years [2005-2011]," he said. "I taught World History, U.S. History, American Government, A.P. American Government, Economics, ASB, AVID and Peer Helping."

He's been in administration at a couple of different posts within the San Luis Coastal Unified School District. "As a school administrator," he said, "I have served as an assistant principal at San Luis Obispo High School and Laguna Middle School. I truly love public education and I am excited to come back to MBHS!"

He's got a simple goal. "It is my goal, my passion," he said, "to lead our staff in making Morro Bay High School a great school. From the start, the central focus will be a simple, specific and unyielding core value — we are about kids."

The priority, Schalde said, is clear. "If ever the question is asked, what comes first at Morro Bay High School, the answer is clear. It is the relationships we create and cultivate with our students."

"At MBHS," he continued, "we care about students and we cherish our relationships with them at the highest level. This is



Scott Schalde is Morro Bay High School's new principal.

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City to Complete Dog Beach Buy

By Neil Farrell



This map from the City of Morro Bay shows the extensive landholdings of Chevron that lie adjacent to the Morro Bay City Limits. The five parcels being proposed for inclusion into the City's 'sphere of influence' are in dark green, with the light green areas showing where the City says homes could be built, one per lot. The white lines are topographical markers showing elevation.

Work to complete the purchase of the Chevron Dog Beach took another big step forward on March 23 when the Morro Bay City Council formally voted to purchase the property from the Cayucos Sanitary District, part of a much larger effort to preserve Chevron's hundreds of acres of coastal hills.

The Council voted 4-1 to complete the \$338,000 purchase

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Wayward Baking Feeds the Soul in Los Osos

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Fresh baked goods entice almost all of our senses from the taste to the aroma to the visual appeal. A new business has put sweet, savory and satisfying on the menu in Los Osos.

Wayward Baking, located at 1001 Santa Ynez, specializes in naturally leavened sour-dough breads and laminated dough made from organic flour and seasonal ingredients. What that means for customers is scrumptious and beautifully designed handcrafted delights.

"It's kind of a leap of faith right now in terms of opening a business during a pandemic," owner Tim Veatch said, "but you know the community has really come out and supported me in a way that I couldn't be more respectful of and happy about. It's just making this entire process for me that much easier."

Veatch is an energetic guy who has no problem carrying on a conversation, directing his staff, moving baked goods in and out of the oven between cutting and shaping dough for his lemon meringue cruffins (a cross between a croissant and muffin) with a precision that is mesmerizing to watch.

"There's something magical to bakeries," owner Veatch said. "I love bakeries, I always have. It's a treat. I think that the way that we're doing it here, you're not only offered a treat, you're also given the opportunity to have something really wholesome, that's good for you. It's going to feed your soul and make you healthy. There's nothing better in the world than sour-dough bread for you. This is 100% naturally leavened bread with organic flour that's grown in California."

Due to the pandemic and the restrictions that come with it, for now items can only be pre-ordered online and picked up by customers.

"It's not my favorite thing or nobody else's favorite thing," Veatch said. "It's just the actuality of where we are with COVID, our social distancing precautions, and the space given. When we



Honeycomb pain au chocolate.

pre-order it gives us the opportunity to make sure that everybody gets what they want when they want."

The lineup of flavor selections changes regularly, but the menu includes a variety of croissants, teacakes, scones, breads, muffins and salads. Pre-orders begin online around noon on Wednesday and must be paid in advance. Get your orders in early because they sell out fast — up to 100 loaves of bread and 50 croissants in a weekend is not unheard of.

Veatch and his two-man crew really amp up the work on Fridays to prepare for customers coming to pick up orders from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Mondays are all about the pizza. Four different, 13-15 inches pies are rotated on the menu with two vegetarian options always available. Recent selections were Margherita, Alle-Pia Fennel

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Virus Cases Down; Restrictions Continue

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County has further opened up its COVID-19 vaccination program, as new case numbers continue to be relatively low and deaths drop significantly from the virus, but the County continues to be in the second-most restrictive tier of the Governor's coronavirus pandemic response.

Variant Detected

On March 19, the SLO County Health Department announced that the State Health Department said a county resident had been infected with the "B.1.1.7 variant" of the coronavirus but it was possibly an isolated case.

"This individual," a County news release said, "has completed their isolation period and is no longer infectious. County officials are investigating this case further, and no other cases of this variant have been identified in SLO County."

County Health Officer, Dr. Penny Borenstein said residents must continue to fight spread of the virus. "Continue to wear your mask in public," Dr. Borenstein said, "stay physically distanced from those who don't live with you, get tested for COVID-19 and get vaccinated against COVID-19 if you are eligible. These actions will continue to protect you from spreading the variants."

Concerning Variants

SLO County, it was announced March 19, has vaccinated over 100,000 people, an impressive number considering that the population is about 233,000 but not enough to drop out of the "Red Tier" (substantial number of infections), in the Governor's "Blueprint for a Safer Economy."

"We are so close to ending this pandemic and we can get there with your help," Dr. Borenstein said.

The available vaccines — four are now being distributed — appear to be working well.

"At this time vaccines in use in the U.S. appear to remain effective against severe impacts of COVID-19," the County said, "even against these variants. As more cases of the variant appear, additional information is being gathered."

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has been studying these variants that have cropped up in other countries and recently showed up in the U.S.

"On March 17," the County said of CDC, "further escalated the variants B.1.429 and B.1.427 from 'variants of interest' to 'variants of concern,' and both are prominent statewide. More than seven of these variant cases were identified in SLO County weeks ago, before these variants were classified as variants of concern."

Vaccinations Opening Up

With its three vaccination sites still doing a brisk business and the serums now being made available at hospitals, medical clinics and pharmacies, the County lowered the age limit for people to get the shots.

On March 22, the County lowered the age limit to 50-older, and a week later, it dropped the limit to 30-older. You'll still have to schedule an appointment, no matter where you get the shot.

The new age limit comes rather quickly in just a couple of months, as it began last December with first responders and medical personnel first in line for the vaccine.

Elderly people 85-older were next, along with seriously ill people and others with pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity, among others.

But while anyone 30-older can register, the County said when they can come in will depend on its vaccine supply.

Press Briefings Cut

The County on March 26 announced that it would be cutting its weekly news conferences to every-other week starting April 7.

"Going forward," said Public Information Officer, Michelle Shoresman, "our regularly scheduled briefings will occur every other Wednesday." Those briefings are held at 3:15 p.m. at the County's "Joint Information Center" at 1133 Kansas Ave. The briefings are online with some reporters attending in person.

The Website will continue to have updated COVID stats and information.

New Case Numbers Slow

On Friday, April 2, the County reported just 25 new cases bringing the total since last March to 20,547 cases.

Statewide California hit 3,573,074 cases and nationwide the numbers now top 30,357,579. And worldwide there's been a staggering 129,215,179 cases.

SLO County reported 215 active cases as of April 2 with 20,072 people recovered from the virus. The death toll in SLO County is now 256 people.

Hospitalizations are at the lowest since the pandemic started with zero COVID patients in intensive care units. The County reported 38 ICU beds in the county and 14 have non-COVID patients with 63% of the available beds unused. Since last March, 705 total SLO County residents have been hospitalized with COVID-19.

Five COVID patients were hospitalized countywide and one SLO County resident is in the ICU at Marian Regional Medical Center in Santa Maria, according to the County COVID website.

As for deaths, 124 of the 256 people whose deaths are being attributed to COVID were 85-older. Some 103 of those folks were hospitalized and recovered.

Some 95 deaths were among people 65-84 with 275 hospitalized. There have been 29 people ages 50-64 who have died of COVID with 173 having been hospitalized for their illness.

Eight people ages 30-49 have died and 118 were hospitalized. And there have been zero deaths among people 0-29, though 28 from 18-29-year olds have been hospitalized and eight people under-18 were hospitalized.

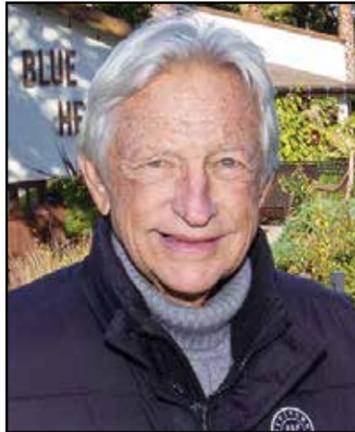
In the Estero Bay News' readership area, Morro Bay has had a total of 418 cases; Los Osos 477; Cayucos 68; in Cambria there have been 177, and tiny San Simeon has had 21 cases.

Paso Robles leads the County with 4,045 cases with San Luis Obispo second at 3,993.

The California Men's Colony prison has had 2,384 COVID cases, according to the County, and Cal Poly (on campus) is at 373 confirmed cases.

For pandemic response updates, see the County's website at: 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 daily, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to assist with questions related to COVID-19.

In Memory of Bill Lee



I had the pleasure of meeting Bill years ago when I had a photography studio in Baywood Park. He was considering making his hotel, The Bay Bay Inn, a wedding venue. We worked together for months planning the site and gardens.

I just heard that Bill passed away.

What really struck me about Bill was how down to earth he was and how well he treated people, with respect regardless of their wealth or status. He told me that he felt he'd been very lucky in his life and he wanted to share that to make Baywood a place for all to enjoy.

To me, those who really knew Bill, liked him and could see the man who wanted to share his luck and his love of this place.

I was lucky to know him. He will be missed, and I am grateful to call him a friend.

Dean Sullivan
Publisher

Public Input Wanted for County Suicide Prevention Plan

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Suicide is among the 10 leading causes of death in San Luis Obispo County. The County Behavioral Health Department, in partnership with the Suicide Prevention Council, has made its draft 49-page Suicide Prevention Plan available for public review and comment until Wednesday, April 21.

"This is the first strategic plan for suicide prevention for the entire county," said County Behavioral Health's Suicide Prevention Coordinator Alysia Hendry, MS. "School districts have their own plans unique to their cultures and needs of their smaller communities, but the county plan is meant for schools, community members, community-based organizations, private and public sectors, and everyone who lives and works in this county."

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and it is the eighth leading cause of death in the county according to County Public Health.

"Suicide is a leading cause of death, not just nationally, but here locally as well," said Hendry "People may also live their lives experiencing thoughts of suicide and not make an attempt, this plan is for them, too. Our county has a higher rate of suicide

than the state and nation. Rates are determined by the number of deaths/100,000. Data alone tells us that suicide is a public health issue. But this plan is not only about data, it's about the lives behind each number and statistic, and works to build a tighter safety net through strategic collaboration."

The Plan is the result of collaboration among community members, government agencies, and private and public organizations. In response to the State's "Striving for Zero: California's Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention 2020," the County and its partners built the local plan based on available data, stakeholder input, and community outreach. It provides a framework of strategic aims, goals, and objectives that will work to guide prevention, intervention, and postvention support for those affected by suicide.

One of the goals is for people to take or host training at their places of work, worship, or gathering.

"We can collectively start to change the language we use when we talk about suicide, learn to ask people if they are thinking about suicide and feel confident in how to refer them to the next level of support," Hendry said. "Bars, restaurants, wineries, golf courses, and so many other places of recreation and leisure can train staff on identifying the signs of suicide. Businesses can include the local hotline number and other resources in their offices, and we have those materials and training staff to support those efforts."

The Plan's release comes at a critical time for promoting mental health and wellness. Although Hendry said preliminary analysis of a comparison over the past 5 years of suicide-related calls do not show an increase for 2020, self-reported mental health concerns are on the rise and some sectors of behavioral health services have seen an increase in clients.

"This year certainly has been difficult," Hendry said. "One of our main concerns is what happens next. There is hope, a small light at the end of the tunnel regarding COVID-19, but the lasting effects that this past year has had on folks is yet to be determined, which is why publishing this plan now can help to inform community members, private and public agencies, the wine, beer, and cannabis industry, and so many more about their roles in suicide prevention."

The goal of the Plan is to advocate for a stronger support system and create lasting change for those at risk of suicide; to challenge the misconceptions regarding mental illness and suicide through community collaboration; to create a community that supports and embraces those who struggle with suicide; and to create an environment of hope.

Questions, comments and feedback on the draft Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan can be submitted at surveyMonkey.com/r/SLOStrategicPlan through Wednesday, April 21. The County's Behavioral Health Advisory Board will convene a public hearing to receive additional feedback as part of their monthly meeting on April 21, at 3 p.m. View and download the plan at www.slobehavioralhealth.org.



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Introducing Nathan Delaney

Nathan Delaney is a Central Coast native who grew up in Santa Cruz and studied at Cal Poly. He has been a resident of SLO County for the last 20 years, making Los Osos his home.

He is a Realtor for Bear Valley Realty, where he translates his market knowledge and passion for the community into helping current and prospective residents find, research, and invest. Whether you are looking to buy your first home, a seasoned investor, or think it might be time to sell; Nathan will take care of you every step of the way.

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Nathan and his family love life on the central coast and Los Osos where kids still play in the streets, neighbors wave hello, and endless hiking and biking trails are just steps from the bay. He looks forward to meeting new members of the community and invites you to stop by the office or call to learn more!

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"This is everyone's chance to contribute to solutions and have their voices heard," Hendry said. "If people don't see themselves or their loved ones represented in the plan, we want to know that so we can improve our reach and make sure no community member is left out of the conversation for prevention efforts."

The survey also has a link at the bottom that folks can click on that will take them to a separate survey where they can input their information if they want to attend the Suicide Prevention Council meetings, or if they are interested in joining the Loss Survivor Outreach team or another workgroup.

Community suicide prevention efforts in San Luis Obispo County date back to the 1950's with the first volunteer-based suicide call line provided by local churches. SLO Hotline (now Central Coast Hotline, 1-800-783-0607) was officially created in the 70's, and soon thereafter, efforts to provide community wide awareness and training began to evolve.

A common myth about suicide is that it is impulsive and done without warning.

"Most people who die by suicide communicated their plans for the attempt to someone prior to death," the Plan reads. If someone is showing warning signs of suicide or expressing a desire to die, friends and loved ones are encouraged to:

- Ask the person if they are contemplating suicide, do they have a specific plan and have they acted on it.
- Express compassion to emphasize that help is available, including confidential resources.
- Reach Out for support by calling crisis lines, which are available to people in crisis and those supporting them.
- Follow Up by calling, texting or visiting to ask how the person is doing and if additional support is needed.

Another myth is that people who want to end their life are determined to do so and can't be stopped.

"Over 90% of people who are interrupted will not go on to die by suicide at another location or by other methods," the Plan states. "Research suggests that those at risk for suicide often show extreme ambivalence about the desire to die or live and express a high degree of suffering. The accounts of attempt survivors suggest that many people are relieved to have lived through an attempt and regain their desire to live. This fact highlights the opportunity to intervene and separate the person at risk from lethal means for a suicide attempt."

For information about warning signs and how to help, visit suicideispreventable.org. If you or someone you know is struggling with suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline toll-free number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

County Divvies Up \$8M in CARES Act Grants

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County has decided how it will spend over \$8 million in federal COVID-19 relief monies, choosing several agencies in SLO County that assist the homeless and disadvantaged and at-risk of homelessness citizens in the county and a small percentage is indirectly going to the North Coast.

The County Planning and Building Department and several local non-governmental agencies that run homeless services and facilities met to determine how best to distribute the monies coming to the County from the first federal COVID relief bill.

The "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security [CARES] Act was enacted on March 27, 2020," reads a staff report from planner Tony Navarro, "and was intended to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 and its impacts. Among its provisions, the CARES Act provided supplemental funding to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist communities in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This funding included \$3.96 billion nationwide for the "Emergency Solutions Grant - Coronavirus (ESG-CV) Program" and \$5 billion for the "Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Program."

The CARES Act came in three "tranches" or phases with the County getting \$1.09 million in extra CDBG monies the first round, according to Navarro's report. It also got \$563,000 in ESG monies.

County Communications Manager, Erika Schuetze told EBN that the State took all of the money in the second tranche.

This third round was open to all the cities and agencies that combat homelessness that the monies would be available, based on population and need, on a percentage basis.

"We detailed the requirements of the grant," Schuetze said, "that any non-profit geographically distribute the funding based on the following percentages of the total funds available - South County - 17%; SLO/Los Osos - 38%; North County - 31% North Coast - 13%."

This third tranche is for \$1.87M from the CDBG program and \$6.29M in ESG monies for a total of \$8.03M to divvy up amongst the organizations and programs that applied for the money.

"All CARES Act funding," Schuetze said, "was competitive through the County's NOFA process. No applications were received by the County from North Coast non-profits."

Several agencies were involved in making the decision on who gets the funding. "Department staff and staff from the Department of Social Services collaborated with city leaders and staff, non-profit partners, the Inter-Agency Review Committee, the County Department of Public Health (Public Health), the County Emergency Operations Center, and the Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC) to develop the recommendations," Navarro's staff report said.

The HSOC recommended giving \$1.18M to the Five Cities Homeless Coalition, "to establish a temporary emergency shelter in the South County," Navarro said. "The proposed emergency shelter would consist of up to twenty 100 square-foot shelter units and related equipment and facilities. The clients would receive essential services and referrals for rapid rehousing."

However, such a facility currently doesn't exist and the 5CHC doesn't even have a location where one might be built. "As of the writing of this staff report," Navarro said, "5CHC has not identified a site to establish the proposed emergency shelter. Based on HUD's requirements, the shelter would need to be operational by HUD's Jan. 31, 2022 deadline for the use and expenditure of ESG funds."

So the County switched to plan B, and a decision was made that if 5CHC couldn't find a site by May 31, "the award of \$1,189,457 shall be allocated to 5CHC for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities."

Schuetze said some of that money could then come to the North Coast communities. "The North Coast will receive funding, based on the geographic split [as noted above] for rental assistance, eviction prevention and rapid rehousing," she explained. "The Salvation Army will use its funding allocation for street outreach in all geographic areas of the County."

In January of this year, the County started meeting with "a wide range of partners" - HSOC, the seven incorporated cities, SLOCOG, non-profit groups, and "other key stakeholders," to come up with a regional approach for these impending millions in relief spending.

Schuetze said, "It's important to note that the six cities in our 'Urban County' [a distinction made by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development] appointed one staff member from their city to participate in the Interagency Review Committee."

CARES Continued on page 4



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

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PG&E Fills Decommissioning Panel Seats

By Neil Farrell

tee.”

The staff report said, “The effort seeks to create cohesion among partners and to fund the most effective paths forward to addressing and preventing homelessness. One goal of this effort is support partner agencies in creating new sources of housing, shelter or sanctioned encampments with access to services and resources in the county to the extent feasible and supported, especially in the South County area, as no permanent shelter exists.”

No shelter exists on the North Coast as well. And apparently no one is actively trying to establish one as 5CHC has been trying to do for years.

Five non-profit groups, plus money for County administration and the COVID response efforts ended up splitting the money.

CAPSLO (Community Action Partnership of SLO), is getting some \$346,000 for operational costs and to buy a new van for the 40 Prado Homeless Shelter in SLO; \$53,000 for an HVAC upgrade at 40 Prado; and \$118,000 for “Rapid Re-Housing Essential Services.”

The El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO) will get \$62,000 to hire a case manager; \$76,000 for Homeless Prevention Essential Services at the Paso Robles Emergency Shelter; \$105,000 for operations of the Paso Robles Emergency Shelter (a former Motel 6); \$188,000 for operations at ECHO’s emergency shelter in Atascadero; \$150,000 for ECHO’s “street outreach” activities; and \$25,000 for ECHO’s administration costs.

5CHC in the South County will get \$791,000 for its Homeless Prevention Rental Assistance and Essential Services; \$956,000 for “Rapid Re-Housing;” \$1.24M to establish a temporary emergency shelter (\$1.89M) and to purchase a van (\$50,800); \$49,000 for operation of a warming center; and \$200,000 to administer the grant.

Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo (HASLO) will get \$2.54M for “Project Homekey,” which will rehabilitate a former motel into transitional housing and an emergency shelter in Paso Robles (the Motel 6 project).

People’s Self-Help Housing will get \$48,800 for its Supportive Housing Program, which subsidizes people’s rents. At first the County wasn’t sure that type of program was eligible but later decided it was and the intentions are to grant PSHHC’s full request of \$98,000.

And the Salvation Army will get \$308,000 for its “Encampment and Street Outreach Program,” some of which is supposed to be available on the North Coast.

Also receiving money are the County Public Health Department — \$247,000 for a health equity program manager; and County Administration will keep \$558,000 to administer the overall CARES Act program.

What’s does a “health equity program manager” do? Navarro’s report said, the “Emergency Operations Center identified the need to fund a 2-year, limited term Health Equity Program Manager position at the Public Health Department. The position will assist the Public Health Department alleviate the burden of COVID-19 among the county populations known to be at disproportionate risk by assessing, planning, and implementing COVID-19 response strategies countywide.”



Some of the rocky shoreline and an offshore rock, form the backdrop for cattle grazing on a Coastal bluff



Diablo Canyon’s man made harbor is part of the power plant’s seawater cooling intake system and one of numerous features that could become part of the property’s future uses.

Pacific Gas and Electric has filled empty seats on its Diablo Canyon Decommissioning Engagement Panel, picking a San Luis Obispo oil-man and a recently resigned Grover Beach councilwoman to fill out the citizen’s advisory panel.

William “Bill” Almas of SLO and Mariam Shah of Grover Beach were selected out of some 65 applicants to fill the seats previously held by Lauren Brown and Alex Karlin, according to a news release from PG&E spokeswoman, Carina Corral.

Almas and Shah will begin their terms in May. Current panel members, David Baldwin and Dena Bellman were reappointed to the board.

The decommissioning panel “provides community input to PG&E as the company prepares a site-specific plan for the future decommissioning of Diablo Canyon Power Plant,” Corral said.

Shah is a former 2-term Grover Beach City Councilwoman who resigned because her family is moving to Arroyo Grande. She has served on the executive committees of the Homeless Services Oversight Committee, the Air Pollution Control District and the California League of Cities. She also sits on the board of the Grover Beach Library, the Five Cities Homeless Coalition and has been active with the Grover Heights PTA for several years, including three years as president.

Almas was a senior real estate manager for Chevron retiring in 2015. He held various positions with Chevron and Unocal including environmental and regulatory manager, manager of government affairs, area manager and environmental and regulatory manager for Molycorp, a subsidiary of Unocal.

He was the lead for property purchases and settlements for Unocal’s Avila Beach oil spill remediation and managed the preparation of the San Luis Obispo Chevron Tank Farm Environmental Impact Report and various property sales.

The Decommissioning Panel members are now: Almas of SLO; Shah of Grover; Baldwin of Atascadero; Bellman of Pismo Beach; Dr. Timothy Auran of Avila Beach and Sherri Danoff of Avila Beach; Scott Lathrop of SLO; Patrick Lemieux of Morro

Bay; Charlene Rosales and Kara Woodruff of SLO; Linda Seeley of Los Osos; Chuck Anders (facilitator); Trevor Keith SLO County ex-officio; and, Maureen Zawalick of PG&E.

Corral said the company was impressed with the number and quality of applicants.

Anders, the panel’s facilitator, said, “On behalf of the panel, we sincerely appreciate the time and effort put forth by each candidate to apply, and we’re thrilled that so many experienced and talented community leaders offered to be a part of this important process.”

“We welcome these new members and feel confident the diverse composition of the panel will enable the group to capture the community’s collective vision related to the future decommissioning of Diablo Canyon.”

The Diablo Canyon Decommissioning Engagement Panel “was created to foster open and frequent dialogue between members of the local community and PG&E on matters related to DCCP decommissioning,” Corral said. “Panelists are local community members from across San Luis Obispo County who were selected to broadly represent diverse community viewpoints. The Panel meets periodically on matters related to DCCP decommissioning and the future use of DCCP lands and facilities.”

PG&E several years ago announced that it was ending its attempts to get new licenses to operate the two nuclear reactors at Diablo Canyon, which are slated to expire in 2024 and 2025.

Instead the company said it would focus on renewable energy sources and would be decommissioning and eventually removing the plant from the 12,000-acre Point Buchon property.

That effort alone is expected to take decades and cost several billion dollars.

The panel, and indeed most people’s interests lie with what the property’s future will hold. The immense property is bigger than Montaña de Oro State Park, which lies north of and adjacent to the Diablo Canyon property.

Potential reuses that have been suggested include a housing

PG&E Continued on page 5

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News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Quick Pickle Kit Celebrates 25 Years



Quick Pickle Kit founders Meaghan Gilbert and Andrea Wasko wearing the company's custom face masks

For the past quarter of a century, the Los Osos based Quick Pickle Kit company has provided jobs for adults with disabilities and financial support for nonprofits. As a social entrepreneurial company, they wanted to do more than make money - they wanted to do good.

The Quick Pickle Kit DIY Pickling Kit is a safe, quick, simple, and natural way to pickle any vegetable in a fraction of the time and with minimal effort, company founders, Meaghan Gilbert and Andrea Wasko, said, adding the Quick Pickle Kit is a fun, healthy and educational activity the family can do together.

"We're on a mission to utilize our business and our products as tools to create a healthier and more caring world," said Andrea, company president. "We do this one Quick Pickle Kit at a time"

Andrea and Meaghan received the SBA's Small Business Persons of the Year Award in 2019 for their philanthropic business model of providing jobs for adults with disabilities and for supporting nonprofits. Recent ways they gave back to the community include virtually mentoring Five UC graduate school of management interns for four months over the summer. They are also Community Emergency Response Team members and support their neighbors by delivering free fresh fruit boxes and are now volunteering with the vaccine rollout.

For more information, go to quickpicklekit.com.

Morro Bay Chamber Supports Racial Equality Challenge

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce released a statement following the recent shooting spree in Atlanta, Georgia that killed eight people, six of whom were Asian women.

"We are profoundly saddened by the rise in violent attacks targeted at the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in the nation," said President and CEO Erica D. Crawford. "The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce unequivocally condemns racism and violence of every kind. We are committed to calling out injustice and providing a safe, inclusive environment for everyone. We believe that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

"Our business community is a woven tapestry of many cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including Asian Americans. From hotel operators, employees of businesses, and a Living Treasure, we stand by our AAPI community. If you have been impacted by racist events happening in our nation, please let us know how we can be your ally and help you feel safe in our community."

For people looking to learn more about how to create a more equitable community and world, the United Way is hosting a 21-Day Challenge as part of their commitment to racial equity, diversity and inclusion. Learn more about the Challenge at unitewayslo.org/edi21.

New Artistic Library Cards Released

New library card designs from the County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries and the SLO County Arts Council were rolled out during National Library Week, which continues through Apr. 10.

Three designs were chosen from a 2020 collaboration and contest. The designs featured on the 2021 library cards are by local artists Creig P. Sherburne, Ken Christensen and Alissa Mad-dren. Anyone registering for a new library card or replacing a card will have a choice of one of the three designs.

"We are celebrating the library's commitment to culture and art," said Edel Mitchell, project coordinator for the San Luis Obispo County Arts Council. "The library is a hub for not only literary art but visual and performing art as well."

Visit the San Luis Obispo, Arroyo Grande, Morro Bay, and Atascadero libraries Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (closed 1 - 2:15 p.m.). SLO County residents can also access the Library at SLOLibrary.org to register for an eCard.

Monarch and Pollinator Highway Takes Flight

Urgent protections for the struggling western monarch butterfly are moving forward.

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo), Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Carmel Valley) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) reintroduced the bipartisan, bicameral Monarch Action, Recovery, and Conservation of Habitat (MONARCH) Act as well as the Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act to help save the iconic and important butterfly whose population has dropped by 99% since the 1980s.

"The MONARCH Act and Monarch Pollinator Highway Act

makes critical investments in conservation projects so we can restore their habitats and preserve this beloved pollinator for future generations to experience and enjoy," said Rep. Carbajal.

This legislation would authorize \$62.5 million for projects aimed at conserving the western monarch and an additional \$62.5 million to implement the Western Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan, prepared by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in January 2019. The \$62.5 million in funding for each effort would be divided into five annual installments of \$12.5 million.

The Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act would establish a federal grant program available to state departments of transportation and Native American tribes to carry out pollinator-friendly practices on roadsides and highway rights-of-way. This legislation would help address the steep decline of pollinator populations, which poses a serious threat to California farmers and the American food supply.

Blood Donors Needed

After successful blood drives at Arroyo Grande Community Hospital, French Hospital Medical Center, and Marian Regional Medical Center, Dignity Health Central Coast hospitals have again partnered with Vitalant in a proactive effort to encourage community members to donate blood. In order to bolster local and national blood supplies, Vitalant is calling on the community to come forward and give blood. The process takes only 45 minutes but can save up to three lives.

The drive is scheduled for each hospital on the following dates:

French Hospital Medical Center - Tuesday, April 13 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the back parking lot, 1911 South Johnson Avenue, San Luis Obispo

Arroyo Grande Community Hospital - Wednesday, April 28 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room, 345 South Halcyon Road, Arroyo Grande

There is currently a critical shortage of blood, and all community members are asked to take the short amount of time to donate. Community members wishing to donate are urged to sign up at www.blood4life.org. Do not donate if you are feeling ill.

Perfect Union is Growing

Perfect Union, a cannabis dispensary chain with a store in Morro Bay, is looking to double its retail locations this year following a \$10.8 million equity offering through its holding company, MWG Holdings Group Inc.

Currently the company operates dispensaries in Sacramento, Marysville, Riverbank, Turlock, Seaside, Morro Bay and Weed. New locations on their radar include Shasta, Marina Del Rey, Ukiah, San Francisco, Napa and Stockton.

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

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PG&E From page 4



A historical information sign is posted at Windy Point, and dedicated to Japanese farmers who played a big part in the history of the Pecho Coast.



Hikers coming from Montaña de Oro State Park trek southward along the state park's coastal trail.

subdivision in Wild Cherry Canyon, which is just west of Avila Beach; adding it to the State Park's system; and returning it to the Chumash, who claim that their ancestors lived on the property for thousands of years.

The property has numerous Native American archaeological sites, as well as coastal bluffs and cow pastures, sandy beaches and pristine oak woodlands.

In the developed area of the actual plant, there is a huge desalination plant, the two 190-

foot containment domes, the brown power plant building, a huge office complex, a marine lab, fire station and other large reusable buildings and even a protected harbor. It also has numerous dry cask storage units, enormous structures where used fuel rods are stored.

These photos were taken during an August 2018 tour of the Diablo Canyon lands and show some of the amazing vistas just along the main road up the coastline on the "Pecho Coast" and Point Buchon. Photos by Neil Farrell.

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News

Sulfuric Acid Spilled at San Miguel Winery

By Neil Farrell

County Environment Health responded and dealt with an acid spill in San Miguel that leaked from a tank at a local winery.

According to a March 26 news release, at 1 p.m. Thursday, March 25, Environmental Health was notified by the County Public Works Department of "an unknown chemical pooled on Cross Canyons Road just south of the intersection with Indian Valley Road in San Miguel," Peter Hague Supervising Environmental Health Specialist said. "An environmental health specialist, in conjunction with the County Hazardous Material Response Team, determined the material to be sulfuric acid released from a storage tank on a vineyard at 8585 Cross Canyons Rd." That winery at that location is Locatelli Vineyards.

The County traced the chemicals back to a ruptured storage tank and by the time they got there, the acid had leaked to a point below the hole, so it had already stopped leaking. It left a streak of contamination.

"The acid that leaked from the tank was partially absorbed into the soil," Hague said, "but excess liquid moved down a hillside to Cross Canyons Road." Some of the acid ran into a storm drain that empties into the Salinas River.

"The impacted roadway was coned off to direct traffic away from the spill," Hague said. "A hazardous waste remediation company was dispatched and arrived onsite in the late afternoon."

The County Haz-Mat Team neutralized the acid that same afternoon "and thus very unlikely cause a threat to public health," Hague said. "The hazardous waste remediation company was further absorbing and neutralizing the soil, road, and storm drain."

The cause of the leak was traced to a tank trailer that kicked the acid tank and cut a hole in it.

Sulfuric acid is used in wine making with regards to the pH levels (adding tartness). The fumes of sulfuric acid are dangerous. "Inhalation of concentrated vapor can be extremely irritating to the upper respiratory tract and may cause serious lung damage. Skin contact with concentrated acid may produce severe necrosis and frequent skin contact with dilute solutions may cause dermatitis."

And, "Contact causes severe burns with redness, swelling, pain and blurred vision. Permanent damage including blindness can result. Ingestion: Can burn the lips, tongue, throat and stomach. Symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps and diarrhea."

It also harms the environment. "Sulfuric acid will exist as particles or droplets in the air if released to the atmosphere. It dissolves when mixed with water. It has moderate acute [short-term] toxicity on aquatic life. Sulfuric acid is very corrosive and would badly burn any plants, birds or land animals exposed to it."

Two Arrested; One On the Lam In Human Trafficking Case

The County Sheriff's Department has arrested two people and is seeking a third suspect in a human trafficking case that started back in January.

According to Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla, "The investigation began on Jan. 26, 2021, when members of the San Luis Obispo County Counter Human Trafficking Team were answering online sex ads as part of the statewide effort to curb human sex trafficking under the umbrella of Operation Reclaim and Rebuild."

The Counter Human Trafficking Team is one senior district attorney's office's investigator, a County Sheriff's detective and a sergeant, with an assist from the Highway Patrol, FBI and the non-profit, Deliverfund.

"Investigators located," Cipolla said, "and responded to a sex ad in which the female in the advertisement appeared to be very young, likely under the age of 18."

Cipolla said, "Ultimately, a 'date' was arranged by investigators and the female subject from the photographs in the sex ad



Heather Lynne Hunt

was contacted by law enforcement."

Officers detained the young woman, who they determined was a 15-year-old missing girl from Nevada. They also identified a suspicious man who they suspected of being the person trafficking the young girl.

That suspected pimp fled the scene but officers caught up to him. That man was identified as Joshua Diante Murphy, 26 of Madera, Calif. But they didn't have enough for an immediate arrest.

"Upon contacting Joshua Murphy," Cipolla said, "investigators were able to connect him to the 15-year-old victim at the scene, however, probable cause for his arrest did not exist at the time of the contact, so he was released."

Officers got more information from the victim, Murphy and "third-party sources" Cipolla said, and that led to the belief that three people were actually involved in this crime.

Cipolla said, Heather Lynne Hunt, 28 from Tipton, Calif., Tremaine Quincy Tejon Jones, 27 of Bakersfield, and Murphy "had been involved in a conspiracy to traffic the 15-year-old victim and to distribute child pornography."

The Human Trafficking Team and the D.A.'s Office worked the case and obtained arrest warrants for the three suspects and on March 18, a judge issued warrants for their arrests.

The next day they arrested Hunt and Jones but Murphy was gone and is apparently on the lam. An arrest warrant is outstanding for Murphy but Hunt and Jones were locked up in County Jail on \$1 million bail each.



Tejon Jones



Police are still looking for Joshua Diante Murphy

Hunt is charged with suspicion of Human Trafficking of a Victim Under 18 Years of Age, Obscene Matter Depicting Minor for Commercial Consideration, and Conspiracy to Commit a Crime. Jones is facing suspicion of Conspiracy.

When he is caught, Murphy is facing allegations of Human Trafficking of a Victim Under 18; Pimping of a Prostitute Under 16; Lewd Acts with a Child 14 or 15; Obscene Matter Depicting Minor for Commercial Consideration; and Conspiracy.

"The San Luis Obispo County Counter Human Trafficking Team is seeking the public's help in locating Joshua Murphy," Cipolla said. "If you know the whereabouts of Murphy, please call the San Luis Obispo County Counter Human Trafficking Team at (805) 781-4589.

"You may also provide information to Crime Stoppers via the website, sanluisobispo.county.crimestoppersweb.com, or by calling (805) 549-STOP."

Traffic Stop Leads to Drug Bust

A routine traffic stop led to the arrest of a Los Osos man on suspicion of dealing illegal drugs and the seizure of over a pound of methamphetamine.

Sheriff's spokeswoman Grace Norris, at 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 30, deputies on patrol pulled over a car for an undisclosed code violation on Mountain View Drive in Los Osos. Deputies reportedly recognized the driver as a local parolee subject to searches.

A parole search, Norris said, uncovered approximately 1.14 pounds of suspected methamphetamine, worth around \$5,000 on the street; and 23.3 grams (just less than 1 ounce), of suspected heroin with a street value of \$2,500, "both of which were packaged for sales."

John Arthur Budd, Jr., 46, was booked into County Jail on suspicion of possession of narcotics for sale and transportation of a controlled substance.



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News

County Applying for FAA Grants

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County will apply for federal COVID relief funds to cover impacts to the County's airports caused by the coronavirus pandemic, even as a contract was awarded for a \$13 million overhaul of the main airport runway.

County Supervisors were asked to allow the airports to apply for a \$2.26 million grant for the SLO County Regional Airport in SLO from the "Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act" (CRRSA) that was part of President Trump's "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021," a COVID relief bill he signed Dec. 27, 2020.

That funding act included some \$2 billion "in economic relief to airports to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including relief from rent and minimum annual guarantees (MAG) for eligible airport concessions at primary airports," reads a report from Airports Director, Courtney Johnson. This money would come through the Federal Aviation Administration.

She would also be applying for a \$9,000 CRRSA grant for the Oceano Airport and a \$57,000 grant from the FAA for the County Regional Airport.

There aren't many limits on how this money can be spent. "An airport sponsor may use these funds for costs related to operations, personnel, cleaning, sanitization, janitorial services, combating the spread of pathogens at the airport, and debt service payments," reads a FAQ page accompanying the staff report.

About the only thing an airport can't do with the money is bank it or set it aside for a future use. "FAA would not be able to ensure a potential future use is a use consistent with CRRSA requirements."

Johnson said expenditures that are eligible for Operations and Maintenance funding include:

- Any purpose for which airport revenues may lawfully be used;
- Generally available for expenditures allowed by the FAA's Policy and Procedures Concerning the Use of Airport Revenue (Revenue-Use Policy);
- Reimbursement requests for operating expenses may not include activities prior to Jan. 20, 2020; and,
- Period of Performance (POP): Four (4) years. Funds not expended within the 4-year POP are subject to recovery by the FAA.

If they get the money it would, "minimize the severe economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, ensuring the long-term viability of the airport, improving the safety of operations and contributing to a safe and livable community."

In other recent airport developments, Supervisors awarded a \$12.62 million contract to Watsonville-based, Granite Const., to completely rehabilitate the main runway at the County Regional Airport.

Supervisors also approved a consulting contract with Mead & Hunt, a nationwide engineering firm with offices across the U.S., with the closest office to SLO County in Ontario, Calif.

Mean & Hunt are already under contract as general consultants and this latest extension is for \$772,000 and includes project management duties. The total contracts for the runway job are over \$13.58 million.

Granite Const.'s contract represents the "Guaranteed Maximum Price" for the construction and post-construction phases of the project. It's being done under a so-called, "Construction Manager at Risk" or CMAR method of project delivery, as opposed to a "design-bid-build" or "design-build" method of delivery.

A CMAR method, "entails a commitment by the construction manager to deliver a project within a 'Guaranteed Maximum Price,' in most cases," according to an online definition of the term.

Supervisors in November 2018 authorized the airport administration to seek FAA "Airport Improvement Program" (AIP) grants to fund several projects at the airport.

"Rehabilitation of the runway," Johnson's report said, "also includes the rehabilitation of the runway lighting system including runway lights, lighted directional signs, power conductors and conduits," as well as the runway surface itself with milling (grinding down) of the old pavement and overlaying of new pavement.

No matter how extensive the work is it will disrupt air traffic at the airport. The SLO County Airport "has only one runway available to commercial aircraft, disruption to commercial service will occur during construction of this project," Johnson said.

"Therefore, an imperative need of the project is to minimize the disruption window as much as possible and CMAR offered that opportunity by getting the contractor onboard early to work with the project designer on logistical solutions such as phasing, staging, material procurement, and establishment of temporary and alternate vehicle and aircraft maneuvering routes during construction as the design was being finalized."

Watch for Utility Scams

With utility scams on the rise during the current pandemic, it is more important than ever for customers to be vigilant and to know what steps to take to prevent themselves or their families from falling victim.

"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, scammers have gotten deceptively creative with increased calls, texts, emails, and in-person tactics and are contacting electric and gas customers asking for immediate payment to avoid service disconnection," PG&E officials said in a press release. "These impostors can be convincing and often target those who are most vulnerable, including senior citizens and low-income communities. They also aim their scams at small business owners during busy customer service hours. However, with the right information, customers can learn to detect and report these predatory scams."

As a reminder, PG&E will never contact a customer for the first time within one hour of a planned service disconnection, and will never ask customers to make payments with a pre-paid debit card, gift card, any form of cryptocurrency, or third-party digital payment mobile applications. Here are some steps customers can take to protect themselves and their families against being victimized:

Register for My Account

* Visit PGE.com and register for My Account. Signing in will provide instant access to balance information, payment history

and other account details and will provide a first line of defense against scammers.

• If a customer receives a call from someone requesting immediate payment, they can log in to My Account to confirm whether their account is in good standing.

• Customers can also call PG&E Customer Service at 800-743-5000 if they think that they are being targeted by a scam.

Add a Family Member to Your Account

• As an added layer of protection, customers can designate family members or another trusted individual to speak on their behalf to PG&E call center representatives.

• For example, an elderly parent could authorize an adult child to speak to PG&E on their behalf and make that person their first call should they receive a call threatening disconnection. The adult child could then call PG&E to confirm their account details.

• To designate an individual to speak to PG&E on your behalf, contact 800-743-5000.

"Scammers are constantly changing their tactics and tricks, so awareness is more important than ever to keep our customers safe," said Melisa Munoz, PG&E contact center operations director. "If an email, visit to your home or phone call doesn't feel right, don't fall for it. Delete it, shut the door or hang up. And, as a reminder, PG&E will never ask for your financial information over the phone or via email."

Signs of a potential scam

• Threat to disconnect: Scammers may aggressively demand immediate payment for an alleged past due bill. If this occurs, customers should hang up the phone, delete the email, or shut the door. Customers with delinquent accounts receive an advance disconnection notification, typically by mail and included with their regular monthly bill.

* Request for immediate payment or a prepaid card: Scammers may instruct the customer to purchase a prepaid card then call them back supposedly to make a bill payment. PG&E reminds customers that they should never purchase a prepaid card to avoid service disconnection or shutoff. PG&E does not specify how customers should make a bill payment and offers a variety of ways to pay a bill, including accepting payments online, by phone, automatic bank draft, mail or in person at an authorized PG&E neighborhood payment center.

• Refund or rebate offers: Scammers may say that your utility company overbilled you and owes you a refund, or that you are entitled to a rebate. Again, customers should immediately hang up and call PG&E Customer Service to confirm details.

• "Spoofing" Authentic Numbers: Scammers are now able to create authentic-looking 800 numbers that appear on your phone display. The numbers don't lead back to PG&E if called back, however, so if you have doubts or have seen any of the above warning signs of a scam, hang up and call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000. If customers ever feel that they are in physical danger, they should call 911.

Customers who suspect that they have been victims of fraud, or who feel threatened during contact with one of these scammers, should contact local law enforcement. The Federal Trade Commission's website is also a good source of information about how to protect personal information.

For more information about scams, visit www.pge.com and www.utilitiesunited.org.



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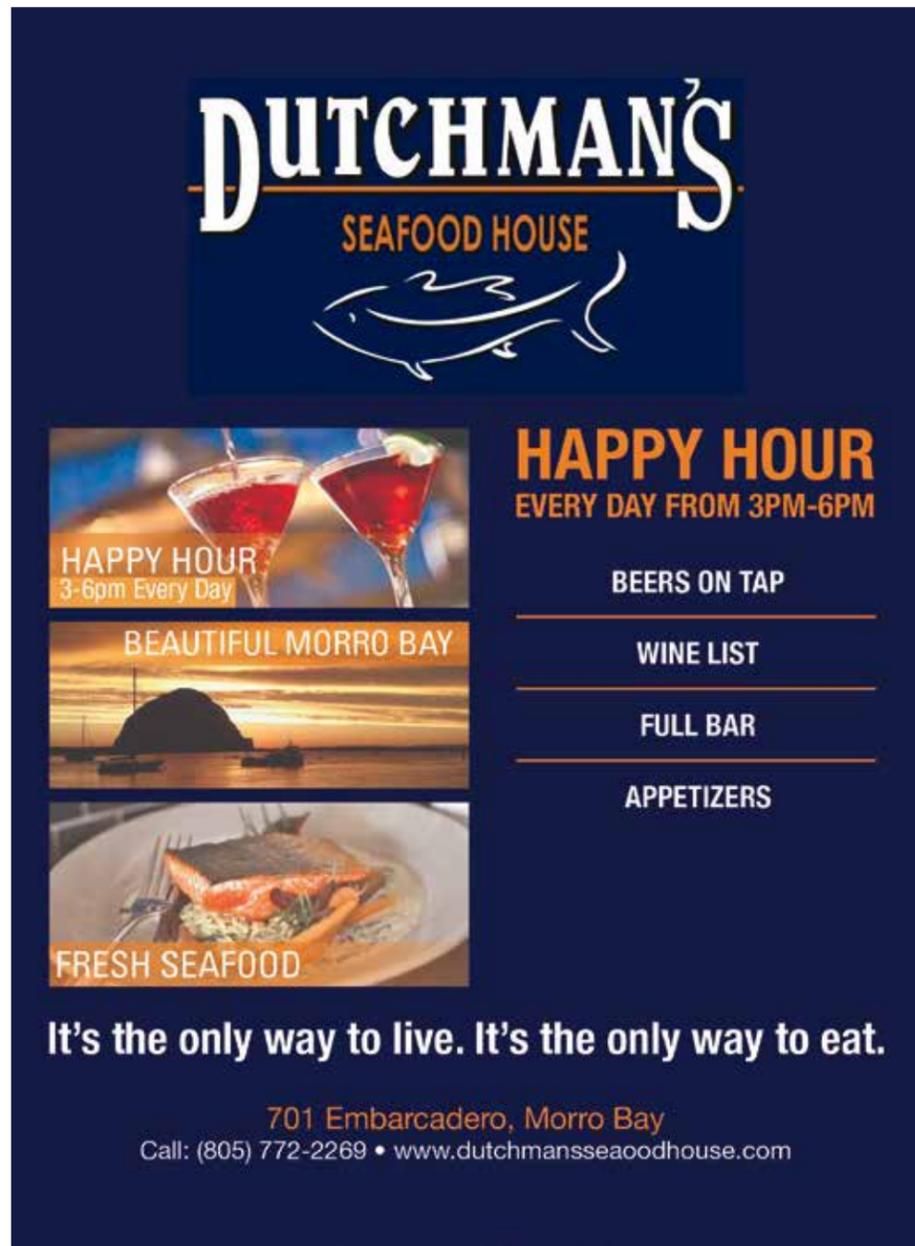
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Police Blotter



Morro Bay Police Logs

- **March 28:** Police caught up to a suspicious man out past the decent folk curfew — 11:50 p.m. — in the 1300 block of Main. The 26-year-old scofflaw was arrested for one apparent doozy of a misdemeanor warrant.
- **March 28:** Police responded at 4:30 p.m. to Legend's, a legendary tavern in the 800 block of Main, for a drunk and disorderly fellow, 40, who was reportedly harassing and challenging other imbibers to fight. Police nicked the flapped-out fool before he got hurt.
- **March 27:** Two cars collided at 6:50 p.m. at Main and Marina. There were no injuries to report.
- **March 27:** At 2:40 p.m. at Coleman Park, officers contacted a suspicious chap, 33, who was arrested for suspicion of giving police a fake name and being under the influence of drugs, which explains a lot. The apparently scruffy Philistine was booked into the County B&B.
- **March 26:** An unfortunate person on Bernardo Avenue escaped COVID lockdown the hard way. No foul play is suspected.
- **March 26:** The Harbor Patrol turned over a bicycle they found by the North T-pier. The mayor is no doubt expected to award a medal.
- **March 26:** Someone turned in a set of keys they'd found leaving it to police to unlock the mystery.
- **March 25:** Police contacted another suspected swagman, 28, in the 300 block of Quintana Rd. Logs indicated he had two bench warrants and was issued a third summons that he won't honor and released.
- **March 25:** Police in the 500 block of Anchor took a report of a grand theft and will no doubt have a jolly good time investigating.
- **March 24:** Police responded at 8:13 a.m. to a motel in the 1200 block of Main for a trespassing report. Logs indicated they cited and released for trespassing some master criminal at the Masterpiece Hotel.
- **March 24:** A suspicious man at the suspect time of 2:33 a.m. had the lights go out for him at Motel 6, as he was arrested for suspicion of being UTI on speed and alleged possession of 2.6 grams of suspected methamphetamine, a tad more than personal party weight.
- **March 23:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 5:45 p.m. in the 900 block of Morro Bay Blvd. The 23-year-old woman driver was cited for a suspended license and her 22-year-old passenger was cited because he had a bench warrant.
- **March 23:** Someone pinched some booty at a store in the 200 block of MBB. Several no doubt valuable necklaces were pilfered.
- **March 23:** Some apparent ingrate vandalized the lifeguard tower at the base of Morro Rock but there's no doubt they'll still rescue the Mamaluke should he ever need saving.
- **March 23:** A power line fell down on the job in the 200 block of Marina.
- **March 23:** Police were asked to check the welfare of a fellow in an apartment complex in the 1000 block of Monterey. He apparently hasn't checked out just yet.
- **March 23:** A citizen in the 200 block of Kern told police that he or she realized their money was missing, coincidentally we're sure, right after their landlord entered the apartment without notice, a case of consider the rent paid, Mr. Roper.

- **March 23:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 2 a.m. in the 200 block of MBB, in the center of the danger zone. The 29-year-old apparent squit was allegedly high on speed and possessed Xanax without a prescription. He crashed in the clink.
- **March 22:** A store in the 800 block of Embarcadero reported a shoplifter at 5:30 p.m. Logs indicated the apparent thievin' bilge rat got away.
- **March 22:** An unnamed citizen turned in an undisclosed person's wallet they'd found at an unknown location.
- **March 22:** Police responded at 8:30 a.m. to the 400 block of Harbor for a reportedly suicidal juvenile, who was given a 72-hour timeout with County Mental Health.
- **March 21:** Police contacted a regular customer at 6:48 p.m. somewhere on Napa Avenue. Logs indicated the lady scofflaw had three failure-to-appear warrants, which is quite an accomplishment for a 25-year old. She was issued FTA No. 4 and released.
- **March 21:** Police responded to a care facility in the 1400 block of Teresa Dr., for a deceased person report. The apparently peaceful passing was duly noted.
- **March 20:** Police responded at 9 p.m. to the 1700 block of Embarcadero where according to logs, a woman said, "the window in her vehicle was broken out while she was sitting in the North Pit parking lot." No word on which illuminutty pulled that boner.
- **March 20:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:05 p.m. in the 1000 block of Main St. Logs indicated the woman driver, 35, was nicked for suspicion of driving stewed on a suspended license no less.
- **March 19:** Police responded at 8:07 p.m. in the 900 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the hombre, 40, was allegedly drunk and arrested on yet another lifestyle crime.
- **March 19:** Police responded at 6:07 p.m. to Embarcadero at Coleman Drive where some apparent idgit ran over a City street sign. A 21-year-old speed demon got his emergency brake yanked for alleged exhibition of speed.
- **March 19:** Someone came to the station house on MBB and gave police 14 firearms for "safekeeping," yeah, for you and me.

- **March 19:** Police took a report of suspected child abuse and sexual battery at Morro Bay High School.
- **March 18:** At 7 p.m. in the 300 block of Quintana, police stopped a suspicious car no doubt running a slalom course down the road. Logs indicated they ordered the driver to get thee to the DMV for a re-examination of his or her ability to drive.
- **March 18:** A man came to the police station that had a warrant. Police wrote him another disappearance ticket and he left.
- **March 18:** Police towed off a car from the 1200 block of Embarcadero with registration expired over 6 months, a likely death sentence for the poor, suffering, disadvantaged vehicle.
- **March 17:** Police responded to an assault at 9 p.m. in the 400 block of Renel. Logs indicated they spoke to an apparent ruffian regarding a domestic dispute he'd had with his soon-to-be ex-girlfriend.
- **March 17:** Police took a courtesy report of suspected elder abuse somewhere in town for County Adult Protective Services.
- **March 16:** A citizen at the Inn at Morro Bay on State Park Road showed police the lock on his car door that some scalawag apparently tried to jimmy open.
- **March 16:** Two cars went badda-bing badda-boom at Harbor and Morro at 1:52 p.m. No gruesome details were available.
- **March 16:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 3 p.m. at the Pitt in the 1700 block of Embarcadero. The driver, 34, was nicked for suspicion of driving while snookered on drugs.
- **March 16:** The high school cop started a report concerning allegations of sexual assault between two juveniles that occurred between 2012 and 2015.
- **March 15:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 5:14 p.m. in the 300 block of Quintana. The 34-year-old fellow had three bench warrants and was allegedly high on drugs, in possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, and so his little party got pipped at the post with a trip to the Hoosegow.
- **March 15:** Police investigated a reported suspected possible alleged case of child sex abuse on Tahiti, but logs indicated it was "unfounded," and no doubt just a big misunderstanding.

Poly Study Finds Increased Risk of West Nile Virus

A new study from Cal Poly and the University of South Florida (USF) is the first to provide direct evidence that light pollution is driving infectious disease patterns in nature.

The research team previously determined mosquitoes and birds are attracted to artificial light at night, greatly enhancing the likelihood that the insects will spread West Nile virus to animals and humans.

Their new findings published this week in the "Proceedings of the Royal Society B" are in contrast to previous studies that have blamed urbanization due to its human population density and breeding hotspots, such as drainage systems.

"Research from our team members at USF had shown in lab-based studies that light pollution could potentially influence West Nile virus risk," said Clinton Francis, a Cal Poly biology professor and corresponding study author, "but our study is the first to show how light pollution can affect risk of West Nile virus in the real world, and better explains patterns of risk than environmental variables previously thought important."

West Nile virus is the most common and serious insect-transmitted disease in California. Between 2003 and 2020, there were more than 7,200 reports of infections that resulted in 320 human deaths, according to the state Department of Public Health.

Mosquitoes feeding on the blood of birds infected with West Nile virus transmit the disease to humans, horses and chickens. In 2020, there were 231 human cases in 26 counties stretching from Shasta to San Diego. The mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus are found throughout the state.

The research team, which included collaborators from the



Many county health departments use sentinel chickens as a surveillance mechanism to monitor for West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases. These animals typically don't get sick from the virus and can't transmit it. Photo courtesy of Alissa Berro, Public Works Department, Pinellas County, Florida.

University of Georgia, modeled West Nile virus exposure data from the Florida Department of Health.

They studied 6,468 antibody samples from sentinel chickens collected between June and December over four years from 105 coop locations throughout the Sunshine State. Researchers found

West Nile Continued on page 15

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Community

Moving Forward: Lynsey Hansen - Finding Her Networking Niche

By Judy Salamacha



Kasey Watson, Lynsey Hansen and Jody Hollier when Lynsey was working at Garden House of Morro Bay. Photo courtesy of Lynsey Hansen

Before most of her friends and clients suspected a worldwide pandemic would impact their lives and businesses, Lynsey Hansen, the recently appointed membership director for the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, knew something was about to happen.

"Mom warned me about a month ahead that COVID-19 was coming." "Mom" is Linda Hansen, who owns Global Directions Travel based in Grover Beach and her worldview business insight was, indeed, global. "She said other countries were beginning to shut down and I better start saving my money because it was going to hit us and be around awhile."

It didn't take long. Lynsey belongs to a book group that had been meeting for Sunday brunches. As they said goodbye after their March 2020 gathering, she recalled saying, "This might be the last brunch for awhile." Two days later the Governor mandat-

ed the lock-down.

Although Lynsey had been a licensed massage therapist for several years, it was late 2018 before she took the leap to officially establish her solely owned business in Morro Bay at 645 Main Street, Suite F. She had attended Lucia Mar Massage School, then certified at the California Holistic Institute of San Luis Obispo. But for her first seven years she saw clients at leased space with another therapist and bookings from her mobile business as she continued to take more courses to hone her skills. Once she opened her own space, she instantly joined and became actively involved in the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce. Her guerrilla marketing strategy focused on networking. She joined the Ambassador Committee, attended all the mixers and helped out with Chamber fundraisers. Her strategy worked.

She said, "2019 was my biggest year. I felt I had come into my own with three-quarters of my time slots filled regularly. I was excited and knew 2020 was going to be even better."

However, her industry was one that had to shutter. "Mom knew it was going to be long-term. I spent a couple weeks feeling melancholy. I tried to apply for unemployment, but being self-employed I was denied. I applied at Albertson's and some other places, but wasn't hired. Then I ran into someone I knew in a parking lot. She was recovering from surgery, and when I asked how she was doing, she said she needed help."

This serendipitous meeting triggered help for a different type of client and opened a door for what Lynsey needed to get her through some tough times. "She hired me for some personal care support and when I told one of my friends, Jody Hollier, I had found a little something for work, she said they needed help at Garden House of Morro Bay where she was assistant administrator. It was part-time doing some weekend cleaning, shopping, and general socializing with the residence. I applied and the owner Kasey Watson offered me a position. Putting puzzles together with the residents was my favorite of many duties."

Lynsey was able to pay the rent to keep her office and ride out the time her business was closed until summer when she was able to take in massage clients again. "I love my massage job," she said, "but I also learned I might need to think about alternatives if this happens again or something else happens, and I can't earn a living."

Massage therapy as a career was actually not on her radar when Lynsey moved to Yosemite after growing up and attending schools in Los Osos and Morro Bay. "I was 22 and had lived in Yosemite a couple years trying to find myself without a lot of

vision." She admits Mom is her biggest fan and best friend, but ultimately her Mom-advice was to get her life together. "She said I either needed to find a real job or she was signing me up for Cuesta College."

Lynsey had to smile as she added, "Living back home again and going to college without a clue what to major in was not what I wanted to do. I wanted a real job that didn't feel like a real job and something where I didn't have to wear shoes."

She knew Yosemite friends who were massage therapists. Their lifestyle seemed to fit her criteria for a career. "I chose Lucia Mar Massage School because graduation day was on my birthday. It is a real job, but it is also work I found out I'm good at. And I don't have to wear shoes while I'm doing it."

During COVID-19 she missed her friends and networking opportunities at the Chamber. "One day I was having lunch with Erica Crawford (Chamber CEO) and she said a part time position for membership director was opening. She thought I had the skills to do the job and being local and owning my business could be helpful when talking about membership. I didn't want to close my business, but needed the extra income so part-time seemed a good opportunity."

Since November 2020, Lynsey has been working her way through the list of Morro Bay business visitations, renewing memberships. Next she'll be inviting new members who she is sure will appreciate the services offered.

"I always wondered if there was a job out there that was full-time networking and talking about our businesses. That's what I now do. I've learned firsthand the challenges of being a small business, but I also know the Chamber helped me grow my business when I needed it. I'm excited I've been invited to be a cheerleader for our local businesses."

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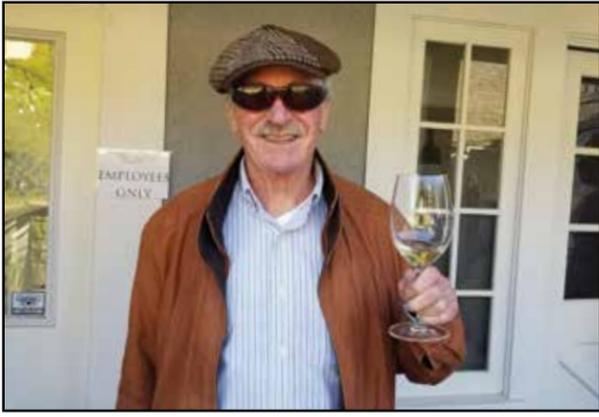
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Community

From Harry James to Daft Punk

By Jill Turnbow



Professional trumpet player Larry McGuire has played his horn with music legends.

Cambria might be known for its tourism, but what really makes it a special place is some of the fascinating people that have chosen to reside in and around the area. Meet Larry McGuire, he and his wife, Mary Margaret, retired to San Simeon, just a minute north of Cambria, in 2012 to relax and enjoy the coast with a glass of wine.

Larry is a laid-back guy, modest and unassuming. Not one to toot his own horn, you might say. But just one question of “what did you do before you retired” opens up a story that is just one mic drop after another.

Larry is a professional trumpet player. Always was. While in high school in 1956, as a band member, he was forced to attend a Stan Kenton concert. Pressed against the edge of the stage, he was hooked. By the time he was a senior, he was getting paid gigs and it would only be a few more years until he would get hired by Stan Kenton himself. And that is just the beginning of the big names Larry can drop. His first big band gig was with Harry James. Twice he was in Harry’s band, playing mostly in Las Vegas and Tahoe. In 1978 he played off and on with Les Brown and his Band of Renown. And then there was those two weeks with Frank Sinatra and Sarah Vaughn at the Universal Amphitheater. “I have some great Sinatra stories”, says Larry. By this time in the conversation, this writer was picking her jaw up off the floor.

The 70s brought variety show jobs with Sammy Davis, Jr., Glen Campbell, Sonny & Cher, and Jerry Lewis. He is even credited on the last album of Nat King Cole. Larry can also list over 20 trips to Japan with Percy Faith and one with Henry Mancini. And he still gets residual checks for playing on Donna Summers’ song, “Last Dance.”

In the 80s a lot of live music jobs slowed down and Larry and Mary Margaret got the opportunity to go to Switzerland to play with the Zurich Radio Orchestra. They stayed eight years. Mary Margaret adds, “He did one season with the Zurich Opera!” Larry says, “We had a great time in Switzerland!”

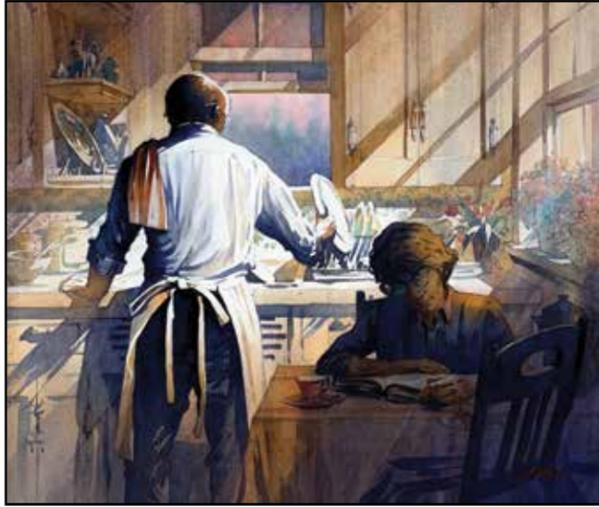
After returning to the U.S. he filled his calendar with studio work, jingles, and film sound tracks. Then as he was starting to consider retirement, he got a contract for some studio work for a group he had never heard of — Daft Punk. The album, “Random Access Memory” went on to win a Grammy. “They were really

great guys,” says Larry.

But Larry put away the horn in 2012. “It was a good life. You never knew what you were going to see, what you were going to do. You would walk into a concert hall and the music would just appear,” he said. “I can’t imagine having a day job. I have traveled the world and made some great friends.” Then he adds, “Did I mention Burt Bacharach?” Mic drop.

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Morro Bay Art Association presents world-renowned artist and author, Thomas W. Schaller for an online watercolor workshop, Architecture of Light, on April 16 through 18 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The cost is \$250 for MBAA members or \$310 for non-members.

Following a 20-year career in New York City as an architect and architectural artist, Thomas Schaller is now based in Los Angeles where he devotes himself full-time to fine art in watercolor. Schaller feels that a final painting begins long before an artist ever touches brush to paper!

The focus of this workshop will be less about technical expertise and more about intent, inspiration, observation and finding your unique artist voice. Enjoy daily demonstrations and discussions. You’ll learn everything you need to know about atmospheric expression in watercolor, including depictions of sky, water, and fog. Then take your art to the next level by exploring the tension, resolution, and connections between complements, including warm and cool, vertical and horizontal, man-made and natural. You’ll discover how to make sure all the parts of your painting work in unison to tell a powerfully communicative story! Students may bring their own photo reference – something that resonates with them personally.

This is a live, online workshop with Thomas W. Schaller. Participants will be able to interact with him and ask for specific help and critiquing. There will be a one-hour break for lunch each day.

Registered students will receive a zoom code, one week before the workshop begins. Students who are unfamiliar with zoom, can contact 805-772-2504 or www.artcentermorrobay.org before the workshop to test your computer, laptop or tablet before the actual workshop begins.

...

Spokes, dedicated to supporting non-profits has confirmed the panelists for the Apr. 13 session of the symposium,

“Taking stock of your financial health and viability.” Keynote speaker Doug Green of La Piana Consulting will be joined by: Wendy Lewis, president and CEO of the El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO). The organization has seen a dramatic increase in need for services since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Wendy will share her insights on how they met the challenge.

Kevin Harris, managing artistic director of San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre (SLO REP). Kevin will showcase how SLO REP, like many other performing arts organizations nationwide, has adjusted to a new reality of providing programming during the pandemic.

Bettina Swigger, CEO of Downtown SLO. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on Downtown SLO businesses and hindered most regular events. Bettina will share how the organization has adapted to help their members in crisis and continue to attract visitors.

Spokes Symposium 2021 brings together experts in the field and regional nonprofit leaders to discuss taking stock, pivoting, and building collaborations to survive and thrive during times of great change. The virtual event takes place from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. on three consecutive Thursdays, April 13, 20, and 27. The event is free for Spokes members and \$35 for non-members. For more information and to register, go to bit.ly/Spokes2021



The next virtual Morro Coast Audubon Community Event is “No Birdbrains Here: The Latest on Bird Learning, Instinct, and Intelligence” on Apr. 19 at 7 p.m. For Zoom login information, go to morrocoastaudubon.org.

Birds can learn from consequences: Baby chicks learn to peck accurately, wild mockingbirds learn to recognize individual people, and pigeons learned to categorize art and music. Even instinctive behaviors like imprinting can be more flexible than scientists used to think, and songbird song appears particularly malleable. This talk will explore bird learning and intelligence, from everyday foraging, to learning through observing, to tool use. Such adaptability may be critical as wild birds attempt to adjust to the many threats they face. Scientists also take advantage of this powerful learning ability to help save endangered species.

Leading the presentation is behavioral and biopsychologist, Dr. Susan Schneider, an expert on learning principles and nature-nurture relations. She is also an avid birder, field trip leader, and environmental activist. A Past President of San Joaquin Audubon (CA), she is currently focused on applying learning principles to the climate crisis. Her award-winning book for the public, *The Science of Consequences: How They Affect Genes, Change the Brain, and Impact our World*, was a selection of the

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Community

Scientific American Book Club. Schneider is a Visiting Scholar at University of the Pacific (Stockton) and a consultant for the Bay-area sustainability nonprofit Root Solutions.

•••

The Joe Wall Band returns to Cambria on Saturday, April 24 at Linn's Restaurant, 2777 Main Street in. The band will play from about 1 to 3 p.m. in the parking lot behind the restaurant. The Joe Walla Band plays both original and covers of surf music, classic rock and oldies. The band consists of Joe Walla (guitar), George Nowicki (drums), and Dave Sanders (bass guitar). The band has been a mainstay in the So Cal music and drag racing scenes for nearly 20 years and has opened for classic rock legends Foghat and Molly Hatchet. This event is free, and there is very limited seating with priority to Linn's customers. You may contact Joe for additional details and booking info at 818-618-9043.



Art Center Morro Bay is holding a live, online, 5-week mixed media basics workshop with Lisa Agaran Apr. 21- May 19 on Wednesdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The cost is \$95 for non-members and \$85 for members. Mixed media art is the ideal medium to explore your creative side without the pressure of having to be artistic or create a perfect piece of art. In this live Zoom workshop, attendees will combine acrylic painting, collaging, texturizing and, adhering found objects. They will also learn the basics such as working with acrylic paints and medium, basic color mixing and composition and end up with two final mixed media pieces by the end of the class. Have fun blending a variety of mediums and techniques to create art that is rich, dimensional and unique. The magic happens when accidents and mistakes are welcomed to happen. This class is ideal for anyone with little or no prior art experience and is the perfect introduction to mixed media. Full Supply list available on the website. Pre-registration is required at ArtCenterMorroBay.org.

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

College For Kids

The Quota International of Morro Bay Charitable Foundation and the family of Connie Wambolt recently established the **CONNIE WAMBOLT/BERTHA TYLER COLLEGE FOR KIDS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP** at Cuesta College. The fund will aid in allowing young people to have an enriched experience in a college learning environment, while also honoring

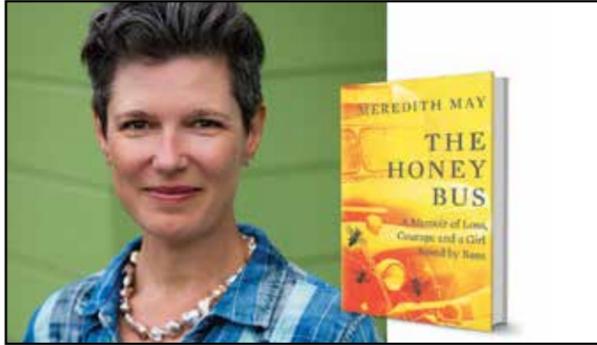
the memory of Connie Wambolt and Bertha Tyler, both beloved members of Quota International of Morro Bay.

Connie served as Director of Community Services at Cuesta College from 1981 to 1998 and was involved in the forming of College for Kids, a signature program that began under her tenure.

Bertha was a huge advocate for helping children, especially in the field of education. Through her community sponsors she raised thousands of dollars every year toward Quota's support of children with communication disabilities.

The Quota International of Morro Bay Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity headquartered in the Estero Bay area. The organization's focus is on the needs of families in our local communities, with an emphasis on education, communicative disorders and women and children at risk.

Cuesta Book of the Year Goes Virtual



The Cuesta College Book of the Year Program is back for its 12th year. The program was canceled last year due to the pandemic and returns this April with free, virtual access to all events.

The Program brings back "The Honey Bus: A Memoir of Loss, Courage, and a Girl Saved by Bees" by Meredith May. The memoir depicts May's struggles with growing up in a dysfunctional, divorced family and finding inspiration and renewal working with her beekeeper grandfather as she adjusts to life in rural Carmel Valley, California. Copies of the book are available for check-out from the Cuesta College libraries and local public libraries.

"We are excited to welcome Meredith virtually and to celebrate another fantastic Cuesta College Book of the Year," said Carina Love, chair of the Book of the Year Committee.

Cuesta College hosts award-winning journalist and author May for a live, virtual presentation about her book on Friday, April 23, from 5 – 7 p.m. Tickets are free, though registration is required. Prior to the event, participants entering the Zoom room are invited to listen to specially recorded honey-themed songs performed by Cuesta College music faculty Inga Swearingen, John Knutson, and Marshall Otwell. Swag bags and signed bookplates are also available with donations.

Other Book of the Year events throughout April include:

- Gardening for Pollinators
- U.C. Master Gardeners, SLO County presents a colorful, illustrated lecture on making your garden attractive to bees, pollinators with Q&A.
- Wednesday, April 14, 1 – 2 p.m.
- Register for required advance ticket: <https://bit.ly/37Bbd3S>

ly/37Bbd3S

• Cuesta Library Virtual Book Club Discussion of *The Honey Bus: A Memoir of Loss, Courage and a Girl Saved by Bees*, by Meredith May

- Thursday, April 15, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

- Zoom: <https://cceconfer.zoom.us/j/3619380274>

• Film Screening of *Biggest Little Farm*

- Free streaming access for 24 hours via Vimeo starting Friday, Apr. 16 at midnight

- Register for required advance ticket: <https://bit.ly/37Bil-wQ>

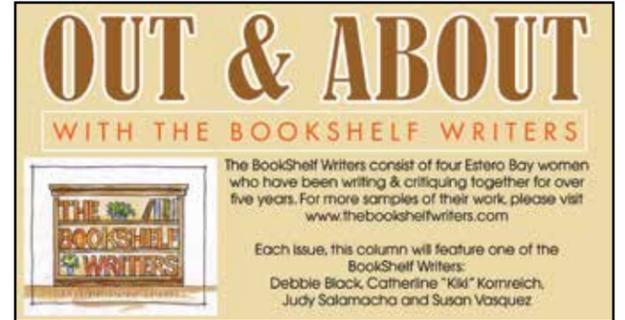
• Biggest Little Farm Film Intro and Q&A with Cuesta Science Faculty Greg Baxley

- Friday, April 16, 4 – 5 p.m.

- Register for required advance ticket: <https://bit.ly/2NTW4Dq>

See the Cuesta College Library's webpage for more details and to check out additional 2021 Book of the Year events in SLO County.

The Academic Senate of Cuesta College's Book of the Year program is sponsored by the Cuesta College Friends of the Library and County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries SLO Reads Program and made possible through donor support.



Pelicans Gone Berserk

By Susan Vasquez

I saw them circling from a mile away. There had to be over a hundred birds, all flying counter clockwise. I kept walking along the tide, getting closer to whatever bird adventure was taking place. They dipped down out of sight, then circled back around and up. When I realized they were pelicans, I was still quite a distance from them, and I figured they were flying over the bay, a large school of fish attracting them. I continued my walk from the beach to the bay, and joined a growing crowd. People were coming together to watch the feeding frenzy over Morro Bay.

A second flock was floating on the water, watching the show, same as us humans. Perhaps they had already eaten their bellies' full and needed the rest. I wondered how the diving pelicans — huge birds, many with a wingspan over 8 feet — didn't plunge on top of the others as they dove for their food. Even the crash of their enormous bodies into the water did not seem to slow them down. The call of fish had captured them, the captors. It all worked in a plan the pelicans understood, giving an impressive

Gone Berserk Continued on page 12



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Community

Caltrans Offers Scholarships



Local college-bound high school seniors can apply for a scholarship from the local Caltrans employees, with two awards up for grabs.

According to a news release, Caltrans District 5 employees and the California Transportation Foundation are offering two, \$750 scholarships to high school seniors within the five-county fifth district — Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties.

The scholarship program is for college-bound senior high school students who plan to attend college in California, pursue a career in transportation and live on the Central Coast.

“These programs are common in many of the 12 Caltrans districts,” said Dist. 5 spokesman Jim Shivers, “and have the encouragement and support of the CTF, which donates 50% of the funding while the coffee and food sales provide the rest.”

Begun in 2002, the program awarded one, \$500 scholarship that first year.

By 2007, \$3,500 was raised and seven, \$500 scholarships were awarded. The program has awarded \$6,750 in total student scholarships since 2017.

Applications are due before Saturday, May 3. The scholarships will be awarded this summer to high school seniors from the Central Coast.

See: www.dot.ca.gov/d5/scholarship.htm for application information. For additional information contact Laurie Baima at: Laurie.Baima@dot.ca.gov or call (805) 549-3353.

Gone Berserk

From page 11

order to the visual chaos that I witnessed.

A passing walker stopped to remark how much she enjoyed seeing my dog Sadie watch the pelicans. Sadie did not even acknowledge the compliment, so focused was she on the action. As we paused, her nose pointed out the growing sea bird circus, and her hind legs shook with tension. I held onto her leash, but wondered what would happen if I just let her go. Sadie, though, seemed as awe-struck as I. She walked with a slow crouching step, watching intently.

Finally, I was close enough to hear the splash of each dive and the background music of sea gull screeches. A tour boat passed by near the sandspit, and a dozen or so youngsters shrieked their approval. I wondered if their presence would slow the commotion, but nothing seemed to stall the avian feast. But, cars slowed, people gathered and cameras tried to catch the moment. A trio of pelicans flashed by in extreme bird acrobatics, and I heard the crowd breathe out a collective ‘ahhh.’

Here, on the Central Coast of California, in our precious Morro Bay, sometimes nature just reaches out and grabs you with its spectacle. All you can do is watch in awe.

Susan Vasquez is a member of The BookShelf Writers. To see more of her work, visit <http://www.thebookshelfwriters.com>

Catch for Hunger Relief Program

The fishing industry has been among the hardest hit by COVID-19 economic impact, and Catch Together, a program of Multiplier, is providing grant support for California fisheries.

Slow Money San Luis Obispo is seizing the opportunity of grant funding to purchase local fish, process it locally and then direct the fillets to feed the food insecure. Slow Money SLO is a local non-profit that strives to support local food, farm and beverage businesses for greater regional food security, better health and economic growth.

Purchased fish landing in Morro Bay began in March. It is purchased at market rates then processed into fillets at Giovanni's Fish Market. Grant funds are also used to pay for processing. The fillets are then donated to entities supporting the food insecure, specifically, 40Prado and ECHO homeless shelters and Meals that Connect. Morro Bay Rotary is donating their time to provide delivery service to homeless shelter kitchens serving the prepared meals.

“I appreciate the opportunity to put nature's bounty onto the plates of the food insecure, while supporting local fishing and fish processing jobs,” said Giovanni DeGarimore, a second-generation owner of Giovanni's fish market.

“Our markets have declined due to COVID-19 and the opportunity to bring more fish ashore while seeing the results feed those in need, is gratifying,” said Bill Blue, one of the fishermen involved with the program.

The fish recipients appreciate the quality protein meals they can provide. In a typical week of Slow Money SLO purchasing, processing and delivery to the recipient non-profits, about 1500 meals are being served to homebound seniors and homeless shelter clients.

“For the past several years, Catch Together has focused on supporting both sustainable fishing communities and sustainable fisheries,” said Erica Boyce, consultant at Catch Together. “In 2020, we launched our COVID-19 Relief Program and have had the privilege of helping fishermen across the country weather the pandemic and provide meals to families in need in their communities. We are excited to work with Slow Money SLO to expand that program into San Luis Obispo and engage with fisheries in the county and with local non-profits feeding the food insecure.”

This program will wrap up at the end of June, and it is hoped that the economy will be making a rebound by then and local fisheries will continue to recover as well.

“Ideally we can generate an on-going, new revenue channel for local fish and local processing as a result of this program,” said Jeff Wade, executive director of Slow Money SLO. “With the new connections and knowledge of the fisheries industry we are developing, it may allow us to introduce fresh fish to our Farm to School program.”



Talk of schools being open to students again in these trying pandemic times brings to mind several one-room schools that were open to students in Los Osos Valley more than a century ago. The Stowe School was one of those schools that brought students to attendance, on horseback no less.

Although Stowe School District was founded in 1878, records indicate the school was built and in use years before the deed was recorded. It was built on O'Connor Way and moved to the Rockwell brothers property situated on a bluff across directly across from Los Osos Cemetery. The 100-year-old schoolhouse was torn down May 7, 1977. Before it was torn down the Rockwell Brothers offered the school for \$1 to anyone who would remove it from their property.

When the Rockwells took out a building permit to construct a retirement home on their property they said, “An entrepreneur agreed to move the school to a historical museum he was planning to start in San Simeon, but he never came and got it.” Meanwhile the County wanted the old building demolished as a condition of approving the final inspection of the Rockwells new home.

The school had been rented out as a student dwelling a few years before the Rockwells bought the property. Stowe School was one of 59 schools in the County in 1878. In 1882 ten boys and 14 girls attended. The teacher that year was James Felts. Later he became the County superintendent of education.

When I interviewed a local rancher, Marguerite Turri, she said she taught at Stowe in 1920. The day the school was torn down she added, “I hated to see the old thing come down. We were just a typical country school. I taught children of all grades, the first through the eighth. During the wintertime we were closed because of the rainy weather. People couldn't always get here. There was no playground equipment at all. They had to think up their own games. They played marbles and things like that.”

Good old school days! I'd like to recommend reading, “Let The School Bells Ring” by Debbie Soto - 2019, and “The Rural Schools of San Luis Obispo County 1850 – 1975” by O.B. Paulson.

Reference: *One Room Schools In The Valley of the Bears* by Joan Sullivan 2009. Drawing by Joan Sullivan, 1975.

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Letters To The Editor



Lithium Battery Storage is Not the Way to Go in Morro

Everyone knows that lithium batteries have been the cause of unexplained fires in cars, hover boards, cell phones, etc. Google the words “spontaneous fires” and “lithium batteries” and you get the picture. So why would we want a plant with 180,000 lithium-ion batteries in the heart of Morro Bay? Not only is there the potential for a catastrophic fire, there are also highly toxic fumes released that pose hazardous health risks to our community and wildlife.

Vistra’s slideshow presentation to our City Council was simplistic at best. Nowhere did it address the possible risks of its proposed facility. For example, in 2019, eight fire fighters and one officer were hospitalized because of an explosion at a small electric substation in Surprise, AZ due to battery failure. There have been two devastating fires associated with a Hawaiian BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) facility in Kahuku, on Oahu’s Northshore. (Details and video of the fire are on Hawaii News Now). South Korea, a global leader in battery manufacturing, has had almost two-dozen BESS fires, resulting in a government probe.

Not only is this proposed facility a major fire risk, but, aesthetically, it would be visually offensive for residents and visitors. The two Vistra BESS facilities under construction in Half Moon Bay and Oakland are located in heavy industrialized areas that are not surrounded by homes, businesses, tourism, or our beloved Morro Bay Rock and coastline.

Reading into the environmental reports at the Half Moon Bay site, schools are not allowed to be within a quarter of a mile of these facilities, but Morro Bay High School is directly north of the project within the radius.

I highly encourage readers and the City Council to do their own research into Lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage Systems. Also, read documentation from the Monterey County Resource Management Agency about the Half Moon Bay project. Look at the construction traffic (maximum of 924 vehicle trips were allowed per day in Half Moon Bay), the construction noise due to the use of heavy equipment, the air quality impacts, and the effects on wildlife and habitats (Morro rendering backs up to Morro Creek) and come to your own conclusions.

Mimi Black
Morro Bay

Morro Bay is Still a Tree City

In response to a letter to the editor by Betty Winholtz (Vol. 3, Issue 4) regarding tree removal in Morro Bay, Betty painted an inaccurate picture. She forgot to add why these particular trees were removed. In the case of the 14 trees at Cerrito Peak, she failed to mention that the trees in the right of way were planted illegally by the previous owner, directly underneath the canopy of the Eucalyptus. This caused severe damage to the health of these trees. This was supported by not one, but two separate arborist reports that deemed them unsafe.

Four Cypress trees were donated to the city for replanting and the other trees were covered under MB’s replanting guidelines. Morro Bay is still a tree city. While some people may not like the city’s decisions, it is still their job to protect the public and remain free of liability. While some may think that Betty’s cause is noble, some consider it a form of bullying. Many I’ve spoken to feel it’s the latter.

Josh Martin,
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

A Dose of Good Dogma



By Lisa Ellman

Three Dog Night

I’ve been sleeping with dogs for years. Of course I’m referring to the canid species — well, more or less. I often have clients tell me, sheepishly, that they let their dogs sleep in bed with them. My reply is, so do I.

I wrote last month about leadership, so why should your subordinate dog be allowed to sleep in your bed? In the prior article I also mentioned spoiling them but setting rules and boundaries; just as one might do with a child. A “spoiled” dog is not necessarily a bad thing. My dogs have always been overindulged, but they know their place in the pack. It’s a matter of balance. Yes, they sleep in bed with me, but they know who the bed belongs to, and it isn’t theirs.

The number one rule of dogs in my bed is that I invite them to be there. I am the first one in bed and they wait on the floor until I invite them to get in. If they choose to go under the covers, fine (but this rule is clean with no fleas). If your dogs are in your

bed before you at night, tell them to get off the bed until you get settled in, then invite them to join you. They can sleep wherever they want, as long as their butt is not in my face - hey, it happens!

The number two rule of dogs on my bed is that they’re not allowed to play. I don’t let my dogs play on my bed because I don’t want them to associate wrestling and playfulness where I sleep. I don’t allow them to have toys on the bed when I’m in it. The bed, my bed, is for us to relax and sleep, that’s it.

Since we’re on the topic of sleeping dogs, I must address a potentially dangerous situation: let sleeping dogs lie. When your dog is asleep and you want to move it, no matter where, it’s critical, for reasons of safety and respect, to make sure that your dog is awake and aware of what’s happening. If you’ve ever been unexpectedly woken from a sound sleep by someone, you know that it can be alarming. Often, when a dog is woken by surprise from a sound sleep, their startle response is activated and they lash out. They have no time to think; they just react. The dog only knows someone is hovering over them, or forcefully pushing and they feel threatened. All you need to do is clap your hands, or call out the dog’s name as you approach. Make sure the dog is awake and alert to avoid the startle. This is especially important for kids to learn.

In bed, with your dog and yourself asleep, it’s not likely that you will make any type of movement that would cause them to be startled or abruptly awoken.

So go ahead and sleep with your dog(s) if you want to, they’re so nice to cuddle with, and they keep you warm!

Good Dogma has been training humans and their dogs since 1996. Readers are invited to submit questions to gooddogma@botmail.com. Contact information for all offered services can be found at www.GoodDogma.net.

Chamber of Commerce Highlights



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News

Fire Chief From page 1

mark on the department.

"We're still using the probationary firefighter guidelines that he wrote," says Chief Knuckles.

Over the years, he has seen a lot of things come and go, one of the more memorable was the old fire station that had stood at the corner of Harbor Street and Piney Way since the 1940s and was in terrible shape with actual mushrooms growing in the carpeting and fungi in the walls. Despite it being about 30 years past its useful life, it literally took an act of God to get rid of it.

"Thank God for the Earthquake," Chief Knuckles laughs. "That prompted the City into action."

He's talking about the December 2003 San Simeon Earthquake that cracked the foundation of the old engine barn and led to its condemnation. That led to the department's expensive engines and equipment being put into a large tent erected behind the old stationhouse, but they would still use the station, until someone closed a door that was always kept open and discovered fungi growing up the wall.

But it wasn't until 2014, when the department used the old fire station for a training exercise, literally torching the place for practice.

"I was a very happy person," Chief Knuckles, who was named interim chief in January 2013, and promoted to chief that March, smiles, "to help with a fire suppression class and burn it down. It went up way faster than I thought it would."

Over the years, he's been a large contributor to the response at countless wildfires up and down the state, learning from some of the best incident commanders in the business.

"I've made so many friends," he says, "people that I really respect. I got to hang out with the greatest emergency planners in the nation." He says he picked up leadership styles and how to manage large incidents "and brought that back home to Morro Bay."

Over a 38-year career, you might think he's seen just about everything, but 2020 and the coronavirus pandemic was a new experience for everyone, the fire department was no exception.

Chief Knuckles had the responsibility of activating the City's Emergency Operations Center plan, which would normally be in effect for a few days at the most after a natural disaster.

But with the pandemic and the City's various programs it started to assist residents, the EOC was active full time for months and was being run out of the firehouse and overseen by Chief Knuckles.

When COVID started, he says, his became a 7-day-a-week job. They've done a lot with the COVID response, he says.

"A fire chief doesn't just lead a fire department," he says. "He has to lead and work in partnership with the other departments and with the city manager."

Since coming to Morro Bay, Chief Knuckles has worked under seven different City Managers and just as many police chiefs. "With Scott [Collins, the current city manager] it's a partnership in everything. He's made my job and my decision easy to retire 10 months after I became eligible. I wanted to do the right thing, and he made it easier."

His actual retirement date is March 30, but he agreed to stay on as an interim chief until July 1. The City anticipates it will take up to 14 weeks to fill his shoes.

The best thing about his career has been "I always try to find a way to say 'yes,'" he says. "Whether I'm working with the fire guys or with other portions of the city, I really enjoy being a problem solver."

His work during wildlife seasons was "very rewarding," he says. In Santa Clara County he worked with 182 ranchers to make sure they could feed their cattle and in Butte County he worked

with the Indian Rancherias (another name for Reservation), and the tribes "to help evacuate them and repopulate them as soon as possible."

The worst thing about it all is the time spent away from family. "You marry a city when you become a fire chief," he says. And many times when your city has to come before your family. My wife is really happy I can turn my phone off at night."

He and wife Deanne, a San Luis Obispo girl that he met in the Lucky's Supermarket in Atascadero, have already done a lot of traveling during their long marriage.

Chief Knuckles says he'll stay active with the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation, which he has been a huge supporter of since its inception, and has organized many annual SLO County Burn Foundation Firefighter Relays.

He's also a football coach at Atascadero High School, which he wants to continue with. His son Logan, who stands 6-foot 8-inches tall, is now playing basketball at Cuesta College, where his coach says he wants to bring back the "big man" game of basketball.

Chief Knuckles has helped coach his son's teams as he was growing up. "I really enjoy that kid," he says of Logan. "I'm blessed to have a great relationship with him. He's a great kid. He has his mother's personality."

In a prepared statement, City Manager Collins, said, "Chief Knuckles has dedicated his life to the fire service and serving the community and leading the Morro Bay Fire Department. Steve is an exemplary public servant and we greatly appreciate all he has done to transform the department, serve the community and lead the City through this challenging pandemic."

"We are excited for him as he prepares for the next stage of his career. I am grateful that he will continue to lead the department as we conduct the recruitment to fill the very big leadership shoes he will leave behind."

Chief Knuckles says his last day is to be July 31, presumably after the City has recruited and hired someone to replace him. Collins says they would be bringing in "outside support to facilitate the recruitment process and include the community, fire professionals from the area and the fire department staff in the process to ensure a good fit in the next Chief."

Principal From page 1

what comes first. Knowing and caring for our students is the best foundation for helping them become their best selves."

He credited interim Principal, Jeff Cadwallader, who took over for the former Principal, Dr. Kyle Pruitt, who quietly resigned sometime last year while school was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic response. Dr. Pruitt is slated to take a teaching position within the district.

"Mr. Cadwallader continues to be amazing," Schalde said, "regardless of trying circumstances. His leadership as interim principal this year has been invaluable."

Why Pruitt stepped down, has not been announced. However, Pruitt did get caught up in the troubles of former auto shop teacher, James Bueno, who it was discovered (and reported in news accounts), allegedly committed some irregular accounting with regards to the student's auto shop club, including allegedly giving a donated Volkswagen, which was repaired by the students, to his own mother.

Bueno, who was also the volleyball coach, later paid some \$2,000 for the VW, with the money going into the auto shop club's account. He also resigned.

In a Tribune news account, he claimed to have been given the responsibility without any training on how to keep the club's books and never thought he'd done anything wrong.

Bueno was largely responsible for resurrecting the school's once-vaunted auto shop program. Dr. Pruitt, in the same story, allegedly was lackadaisical with oversight of Bueno's actions.

The school district turned the matter over to the Morro Bay Police Department for investigation. MBPD Cmdr. Amy Watkins recently said they were still investigating the matter but would turn over the results to the District Attorney's Office, should they recommend prosecution.

Reached by phone, Schalde complimented his predecessor. "I've known Kyle a long time," he told Estero Bay News. "He did a really great job." He especially complimented Dr. Pruitt for steering the school through a series of major construction projects (still ongoing) and for hiring some amazing teachers. "It was a Herculean task and he did wonders."

He acknowledged the troubles the school has seen over the past several months, including allegations of sexual misconduct by teacher and coach, Tyler Andree with two female students that hit the news in late January. "My goal is to be very forward looking," Schalde said.

Schalde and Cadwallader and the rest of the administration will start work on plans for the next school year. Though he doesn't officially take over until July 1, Schalde said he and the

administrators will be meeting regularly and working on plans for next year, when it is hoped students will be back full time.

He marvels at how the students at MBHS respond when you give them a little encouragement, something he saw repeatedly when he was teaching there. He also plans to work more closely with the administration at Los Osos Middle School to try and smooth the transition from middle school to the big, scary, high school, which some students must feel.

It's hoped that by when school starts next year, it'll be a normal year. School has been anything but normal since late March 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic struck, and the Governor ordered schools closed and everyone but "essential workers" to stay at home.

The initial campaign to slow the spread of the virus closed most private businesses, laying off tens of millions of people nationwide, and schools began so-called "distance learning," in essence taking classes over the Internet, which led to many students' grades to slip.

"The pandemic has thrown everything off," Schalde said.

All Spring 2020 sports were canceled, along with the Fall 2020 and indoor Winter 2020-21 sports.

On this past March 15, the school district reopened MBHS partially, with so-called "hybrid" learning.

In March, the school was also able to offer some fall sports teams — football, tennis, cross country — with abbreviated seasons. Spring sports should go on normally but the indoor winter sports — basketball, wrestling — won't compete at all.

Schalde said he wants to set up community forums this spring, "to ensure we hear and know the thoughts and perspectives of all of you. Again, I look forward to future opportunities to meet the families and students of our wonderful community."

"You've got to be positive," Schalde said, "be visible and show that you really care."

He also wants to work closer with the local media and make sure there "are more good news items in the newspaper than bad news."

Dog Beach From page 1

of Dog Beach, the roughly mile-long beach separating Morro Bay and Cayucos. The CSD had purchased the two beach parcels as part of its sewer treatment plant project, reusing one of two undersea oil loading lines running offshore under the sand for a discharge line.

The Chevron Estero Marine Terminal loaded tanker ships moored in Estero Bay from 1929 to 1999, when it was closed upon the completion of direct pipelines from the San Ardo and Oildale well fields to a Southern California refinery.

The City Council also agreed to make application to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo.) to have five, large lots along Panorama Drive, Zanzibar and Blanco streets that border the City Limits, brought into the City's "Sphere of Influence" or SOI, with a possible eye at being annexed into the city at some future date.

The City will also ask to have a parcel east of Hwy 1 adjacent to Chevron's former "Shore Plant" and Toro Creek Road removed from the City Limits, turning it over to County jurisdiction.

The CSD is expanding a lift station on that parcel for its new treatment plant, which it also bought from Chevron. That parcel will be deeded to the County Parks with the CSD retaining a permanent easement for its pipelines.

The land transactions are the early stages of a much larger effort to conserve the hundreds of acres that Chevron owns, essentially the entire area between Morro Bay and Cayucos.

This monumental and complicated effort is being coordinated via several governmental agencies, conservation and funding organizations.

"The City, County of San Luis Obispo, Cayucos Land Conservancy [CLC], Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County [LCSLOC], [Dist. 2] Supervisor Gibson's office, Trust for Public Land, Cayucos Sanitary District and Chevron have all invested a significant amount of time and resources" reads a staff report from the Council's March 23 meeting.

The Morro Bay Open Space Alliance is also involved in the overall project, more specifically the preservation of a vast canyon area located east of the City's Del Mar Park, which is the next phase of the project with fundraising just now getting underway.

Money for the City's purchase of Dog Beach was donated by the CLC and Land Conservancy of SLO County (\$188,050), and the California Coastal Conservancy (\$150,000).

In its most recent newsletter, CLC thanked its supporters and said, "As you may recall, the plan to purchase the southern end of Dog Beach from the Cayucos Sanitary District and to have it become a part of the City of Morro Bay is actually the 2nd step of the larger Toro Coast Preserve Project."

For its part, Chevron conditioned the beach parcels' sale on the City applying to have the five "Panorama" lots put within the City's sphere of influence.

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

KEVIN O'CONNOR, President

News

"When CSD acquired the Dog Beach Lots from Chevron," the City report reads, "Chevron retained a right to reacquire the lots under certain circumstances. As this right to repurchase is on record title, the City would take the Lots subject to that right — unless Chevron amends title."

There's a bit of a quid pro quo going on here. "Chevron has agreed to remove its repurchase right from record title if the City authorizes submittal of an application to LAFCo., to amend the City's SOI to include five lots above the Panorama area."

That catch didn't set well with some residents that commented before the meeting with many pointing out that the hillside above Panorama Drive is subject to movement in heavy rain years and thus unsuitable for any development.

"I oppose any residential development of 5 lots of the Panorama property," wrote Belinda Reyna, a neighbor of the property. "The current narrow, poorly paved roads in North M.B. do not support any extra traffic. These hillsides are subject to landslides, affecting all the current residents below. We have had landslides in the past."

"I would approve leaving it open with trail access."

Former Mayoral candidate, Tina Metzger questioned the wisdom of annexing landslide prone hills. "Are you sure you want to bring into the MB City Limits the Panorama Drive Chevron parcels, which have the 'High Landslide Risk Rating' and will be a potential City liability if the existing topography is disturbed? Will the City's insurance cover any liability concerning the known High Landslide Risk?"

The last time the area significantly slide was 1995, when we had over 30 inches of rainfall over the winter. According to long-time area resident, Mel Honda, "Large sections of soil have moved twice in years of heavy rain, once in 1960 and again in 1995, causing major damage to homes, property and roads. I was present in '95 when the last major earth movement occurred. Heavy rain saturated the soil 30-feet deep, creating a slip plane where the water hit bedrock."

He noted that in 1995, a large section of the hillside above Panorama about half way up the hillside, moved and damaged numerous homes. That event also cracked a hole in the Whale Rock Pipeline, which runs along the eastern edge of the City, and led to the Whale Rock Commission rerouting its pipeline down to Tide Avenue for several blocks.

Water and sewer lines were severed, retaining walls were cracked and displaced, several homes had their foundations cracked, and some had to be demolished.

After the 1995 slide, Chevron conducted an extensive hydrological study of the hillside and determined that when rainfall hits about 30 inches or more in a winter, the land is subject to movement.

In that aftermath, Honda said. "Chevron, owner of the property, held an informational meeting for neighbors in the affected area. City officials, Chevron representatives and the California State Geologist were present and explained why the slide happened and that the area should not be disturbed in order to help prevent a repeat of the incident."

The five lots vary in size, ranging from 6.3 acres for a lot along Zanzibar, to 14.8 acres for a lot above the old Navy Fuel Depot property at 3300 Panorama Dr. The majority of the "buildable" areas on the lots are below 200-foot elevation, according to a City map. In all, the five lots cover some 36.5 acres.

Former Councilwoman and council critic, Betty Winholtz urged caution. "Free use of dog beach as it exists today may be hampered by the acceptance of the grants. Currently, Prescriptive Right guarantees dogs and their people access to the beach lots — without having to be purchased."

Several commenters noted the use of State monies via the Coastal Conservancy, and the possibility the City might have to install snowy plover protections, as State Parks did two decades ago on Morro Strand Beach. One of the first things State Parks did was ban dogs on the beach to protect the threatened plovers.

The Open Space Alliance was supportive of finishing the deal for Dog Beach but cautious about the Panorama lots. "The chief benefit in negotiating with Chevron regarding limited development on the Panorama Lots," MBOSA said in a letter to Council, "is for the City to gain control of it to ensure compliance with City standards and, importantly, to preserve the great bulk of the hills in the view shed as undeveloped open space, zoned for agriculture."

MBOSA called on the City to limit development to just one, single family home, with allowable granny units, and restrict building to "as low as possible on the hillside. We are all aware of the potential for landslides in the area and the need to locate any development carefully. We expect to see a development plan with environmental concerns defined along with clear mitigation steps for any problems."

Last week, Estero Bay News sent several questions to City officials concerning mainly the beach and the future bike trail along the bluff top.

Will Dog Beach remain just that, a beach that allows dogs? "It will remain open to dogs," Community Development Director Scot Graham replied, "but we do need to develop a management

plan within 3 years of purchase to address public [and dog] access and to protect the environmentally sensitive habitat that is located on the property. The intent is to leave it as an off-leash dog beach."

How does a park master plan process work? "We would either contract for a consultant to prepare the document, or we could possibly work with the land conservancy groups to develop the plan."

Would the change in ownership and jurisdiction change who has the lead on the bike path project?

"County is lead agency on the [connector trail] project," Graham said. "They will be going through a consolidated coastal development permit process; meaning instead of getting separate coastal development permits from the City, County and Coastal Commission, they will just get one CDP from Coastal Commission."

That's the same permitting process the City used for its Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) treatment plant project.

Another possible future issue is with paragliders who take off from the hilltop above Cayucos and land on the bluff at Dog Beach.

"Paragliders would be considered an aircraft," Graham said, "and are prohibited from landing within the city unless the person has a Special Use Permit."

As for the Panorama lots, Graham said they would put deed restrictions on them. "We will condition/restrict them to allow one home per lot [includes ADU's] and to prohibit subdivision; and Chevron is OK with this."

He added that while Chevron could sell the five lots independently, that's not what they want to do. "Yes, Chevron could sell them separately," he said, "but they desire to sell them together so that it's easier to work out access and utilities."

As for the connector bike path, is the City going to take maintenance responsibility for it? "Yet to be determined," Graham said. "Maintenance will likely be spelled out in some type of MOU [memorandum of understanding]."

Graham added that they hope to make application to LAFCo., regarding the Panorama lots by the end of April and will also have to put in a "detachment" application for the CSD's lot east of the highway.

LAFCo., stripped the City of its entire sphere of influence in 2007 when it determined that the City could not annex the property, as it hadn't shown any interest in annexation and because of a voter initiative that calls for the City to seek voter approval for all annexations to the city.

That vote has never been challenged and the City, through its WRF project, reportedly got a legal opinion that it is unconstitutional.

That issue may soon come to a head, as the City is also contemplating the eventual annexation of its sewer treatment plant site, which also sits outside the City Limits.

Feeds The Soul From page 1

Sausage and Nettle, Hen of the Woods Mushroom and Green Garlic, and Pizza Carbonara with farm fresh eggs. They are made fresh every Monday and ready for pick up at times specific to each customer from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Veatch says that there is no such thing as a bestseller at Wayward because everything is seasonal and rotates.

"I put new stuff online, and oh man people jump all over it," he said. "That's kind of the fun part about what we're doing here, there's always going to be something new."

He does recommend that people try the ordinary loaf of sourdough as well as the plain croissant to start

"I don't think there is a better way to tell if someone knows what they are doing in terms of baking than trying the most plain versions of a product," he said. "If you want to understand what we do here and why we do it, having a plain butter croissant and grabbing a loaf of our sourdough is really going to just tell the whole story. You are going to know the kind of quality, the kind of intricate processes and the attention to detail that we are using in the bakery across the board. You can dress up a lot of stuff, hide a lot of mistakes with flavorings and seasonings and in manipulation. When it comes to a plain croissant or a just an ordinary loaf of sourdough, there's really nothing you can do to hide any of the flaws; they're all going to be right out there in the open. It's like going out without make up on."

Part of the reason for the name of the bakery is a tribute to the culinary journey Veatch was on before opening the new business.

"It's been a hell of a ride," he said. "It's gone just kind of left to right, anywhere from the Bay Area off to Italy and as high up as Michelin star restaurants."

Locally, he has been a cook at Windows on the Water in Morro Bay and his bread gained popularity at the now shuttered Baker and Brain winery in Los Osos.

Future plans are for customers to come in daily and choose from display cases with mouthwatering breakfast items, coffee and, what Veatch calls, waiver provisions for lunch in the front part of the working bakery while surrounded by the intoxicating aromas. Pizzas will still be available for an evening meal

"You'll be able to show up on any given day and get consistent things that we always have like our ham and cheese croissant or our regular croissant," Veatch said. "You are also going to be able to come in and see things that are brand new, completely seasonal things that, I've just gotten a hold of. Whatever my inspiration will be for the week, I'll be able to put in the case."

For more information or to place an order, go to waywardbaking.com. Inventory for the website is updated Wednesday mornings with specials updated throughout the week via Instagram.



Pizza's are made fresh every Monday and ready to pick up at times specific to each customer from 4:40 to 8:30 p.m.



Naturally Leavened Sourdough is a mainstay at Wayward Baking. Photos courtesy of Wayward Baking.

West Nile From page 8

most cases of West Nile virus were present in chickens exposed to low levels of light compared to those surrounded by unpolluted and intensely light-polluted areas.

"We think that we got a peak at low levels of light because of the many ways that light pollution is probably driving risk of infection," said Marty Martin, professor of disease ecology in the USF Center for Global Health and Infectious Disease Research, a Tampa-based facility that works to improve the health of people afflicted by infectious diseases through improved diagnostics, treatments and preventive mechanisms.

Many county health departments use sentinel chickens as a surveillance mechanism to monitor for West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases. They typically don't get sick from the virus and can't transmit it to mosquitoes, people or other birds. Counties strategically place coops in locations that best represent the local human population, helping identify where to direct mitigation efforts that can prevent the spread of infection.

Prior research showed that light pollution affects birds' immune responses to West Nile virus. This light pollution may also increase the number of mosquitoes in an area because most insects are attracted to light. Birds may in turn be attracted to these areas to feed on the mosquitoes that also bite the birds, thus increasing the risk of West Nile virus spreading in that location.

These findings support a 2019 study from USF that found exposure to artificial light increases the infection period of wild birds, increasing the potential of West Nile virus outbreaks by 41 percent.



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