

## Violations at WRF Plant Site Fixed; No Fines Issued

By Neil Farrell



This aerial photo taken by a drone shows the Water Reclamation Facility treatment plant jobsite as it was last August. Photo courtesy Carollo Engineers

The City of Morro Bay has in recent months been addressing violations of its discharge permit for the new sewer treatment plant from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and while the water board indicated there would be hefty fines for non-compliance, the matter was resolved amicably.

It started with a site inspection by the RWQCB last Oct. 20, when inspectors with the water board visited the Water Reclamation Facility project's treatment plant jobsite located above the terminus of South Bay Boulevard at Hwy 1.

The inspection was to check with compliance with the project's "National Pollution Discharge Elimination System" (NPDES) permit, and a "Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities" permit as well. Both were actually issued by the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento with the Central Coast RWQCB in charge of compliance.

The water board inspectors noted several issues with the initial inspection and five days later, on Oct. 25, a significant rainstorm prompted them to issue a "Notice of Violation" (NOV) on Nov. 8 with a second notice Dec. 20.

In essence the City was dinged for "insufficient erosion and sediment controls, and additional soil cover at the WRF site," reads a news release from Public Works Director, Greg

Kwolek.

The City's permit required "dischargers" to put in "effective soil cover for inactive areas and all finished slopes," reads the NOV. The permit requires the project use "best management practices," which means adhering to industry standards.

"During the Oct. 20, 2021 onsite inspection," the water board's notice reads, "Central Coast Water Board staff observed graded slopes without adequate sediment or erosion controls. The site had large areas of exposed soils in active and non-active areas of construction. Erosional features such as gullies and rills were noted on lower slopes adjacent to a nearby drainage."

"Following the inspection, approximately 2.5 inches of rain fell at the site on Monday, Oct. 25, 2021."

That rain created even more gullies through the project site and "sediment accumulation in the site's concrete swales and turbid water discharging from the site," the water board said. "Observations from our onsite inspection and review of the rain event inspection report show that the sediment and erosion controls were not effective or adequate to prevent significant erosion and sediment discharge."

Quality testing of the rain runoff from the site also showed too much turbidity, and another violation of the permit. A follow-up inspection on Dec. 10 noted continued

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## Moving Forward: Ron McCarley, Jazzman at Cuesta & SLO Music Scene

By Judy Salamacha



Local musician and teacher Ron McCarley is holding on to his music in challenging times.

San Luis Obispo County's music scene is vibrant! Or will be again post-COVID. Most events, restaurants and coffee bars, wineries, taverns, concert halls, religious services, even training sessions at our music stores and at all levels of education venues include live music. Musicians, will you be ready to find your group, a career, a retirement gig or even a side-hustle to share your music live? Training and networking with area musicians might be your entry to landing yourself a local gig.

Many local musicians have trained at Cuesta College. Ron McCarley is the director of jazz studies at Cuesta College. He said, "Cuesta started Tuesday (January 17), but it's still a great time to jump in! My big band (Ron McCarley Jazz Quartet) is usually about 20 people and each combo is about six people, we usually have at least five of those. My other classes range 10-25 people. Josh Collins, Kevin Garin, Stan Loken, James Gallardo, just to name a few, are some students to go on to very cool music careers and I have many students who continue to play music, but have moved to something else for their careers."

McCarley was inspired and mentored by a music teacher. "My high school (Dos Palos High School) had a very strong jazz program under the direction of Isaac Jenkins. He believed in me and gave me so many solos and so much encouragement.

**Jazzman** Continued on page 14

## Local Garage Installing Anti-Catalytic Converter Theft Device

By Neil Farrell

Did some scoundrel steal the catalytic converter off your Prius or are you worried someone might?

A Morro Bay businessman has invented a device designed to prevent what's becoming an ever-growing crime wave.

For the past several years, sneaky thieves have roamed the night, looking mainly for Prius and other hybrid models, shimmying underneath the vehicle with a reciprocating saw to remove the smog reduction devices, and then hocking them for the precious metals found inside.

It's a crime that normally comes in waves, with thieves stealing dozens at a time and mostly getting away with it. But not always.

Recently, Morro Bay Police with some assistance from Atascadero P.D. caught one of these alleged thieves, a man from Oakland, pretty much red-handed, with some 15 catalytic converters piled into his trunk. Two accomplices managed to avoid arrest and are being sought. And just last week three catalytic converters were stolen in Morro Bay in a



Morro Bay's Bill Todd of Todd's Garage, has invented the 'CAT ARMOR,' a device designed to thwart the theft of catalytic converters off Priuses but able to be modified for other vehicles. Submitted photo

**Anti-Catalytic** Continued on page 14

## Maritime Museum Opens Kids Cove

By Neil Farrell

Kids don't have a lot to do on The Embarcadero, but thanks to the Maritime Museum, they've got a few new fun things to enjoy.

Scott Mather and a small army of volunteers are putting the finishing touches on exhibits that kids can play with and enjoy.

Those include a display where they can learn to tie various "sailor's knots" and a demonstration of the scientific principal involved in a block and tackle system.

But perhaps the coolest thing is a new exhibit recreating the cannon battery one might have found on an old-time tall ship, harkening back to when pirates roamed the seven seas, epic naval battles, and the days when he who ruled the seas ruled the world.

Maritime Museum Association President, Scott Mather, said that with the Morro Bay Aquarium and the Skateboard Museums both closed, the association wanted to do something for the kids.

"We decided to do some kids-oriented exhibits," Mather said. They wanted the new features of the museum, which is located on The Embarcadero at Front Street (look for the



John Burgener, a.k.a. 'Johnny Spindriff,' poses with the ship's battery, cannon compartment he built for the Morro Bay Maritime Museum to display a 16th Century ship's cannon. It's one of several new exhibits in the new 'Kids Cove' at the museum. Photo by Neil Farrell

giant submarine), to be family friendly and bring the idea of maritime history to the younger visitors, so the "Kid's Cove" was born.

"We wanted it to be educational, fun and competitive," Mather said. "Parents like it because the kids are having fun in Morro Bay."

He added that the City Council was a big help, as the

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# City Council Doubles Its Pay

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay’s City Council has voted itself a pay raise, lifting their monthly paychecks to be more in line with other local city council pay.

The Council voted 5-0 on Jan. 11 to enact a recommended pay increase that doubles their monthly stipend, plus adds another \$230 to the Mayor’s pay.

Council members have been getting \$500 a month, plus benefits paid for by taxpayers and reimbursements for expenses representing the City, since 2002, the last time they voted in a pay increase.

Additionally, the mayor was getting another \$200 a month for the extra work expected of him or her, which was first granted in 1999.

Morro Bay’s City Council persons have always been compensated for their time, since the town’s incorporation in 1964. It should be noted that this pay is a “stipend,” meaning they get that amount no matter how many hours are spent representing the City on various outside boards and commissions, or the number of hours actually worked at the job.

So until last week, all council members were getting \$500 a month with the Mayor an additional \$200.

When the raise goes into effect, the council will all get \$1,000 a month with the Mayor getting an extra \$430 a month for a total budget expense of \$64,800, up from the previous \$32,400.

City Manager Scott Collins said the raises aren’t out of line for councils in SLO County. “When comparing the new Council stipend amount and existing benefits to the cities in SLO County [minus City of SLO which is an outlier],” he told Estero Bay News, “MB would earn a bit less than the average.”

As it’s been nearly two decades since the council last had a pay raise, the Council last summer asked the staff to have the Citizens Finance Advisory Committee (CFAC) take a look at the compensation rates, “as one factor that may limit who is able to dedicate the time to run for local office,” reads a staff report on the issue. “For example, individuals who work full time may find it challenging to run for local office and dedicate significant time to the role in exchange for a nominal monthly stipend.”

City Council is not considered a “full time” job but rather a volunteer position. After all, one must seek the office and stand election to essentially be “hired” by voters.

Over the years, however, the position has become more and more involved, as council persons also sit on various Countywide boards and commissions, which adds to the time spent on the job, but do not add to the pay.

CFAC looked at the issue last November and asked that further information be provided regarding the fringe benefits, namely health insurance. In December they voted 6-1 to recommend the pay increases, the report said, but recommended no changes to the benefits package.

The City is supposed to review the council’s compensation every 4 years but the Coronavirus Pandemic response delayed it. Now, the pay raise won’t go into effect

until after the November 2022 General Election and the next council is sworn in (usually around Dec. 8), as required under the State Government Codes, which governs how Morro Bay’s elected officials are paid.

And the new rates will stay in effect until at least 2026, the next time the City is slated to look at council compensation.

As an amendment to a City ordinance, the Council will have to vote again on the matter, which will likely appear as a consent agenda item and not be addressed, unless a council member pulls it for discussion. Collins said it would come back at the Jan. 25 meeting, which is after EBN’s deadline.

Also, the law provides that citizens can set council compensation via an election initiative, however, the City Manager said he does not know of any effort to do that currently underway.

Three council members — Jeff Heller, Dawn Addis and Mayor John Heading — will be up for re-election in November. None have yet to announce whether they will seek re-election and the nomination period isn’t until this summer.

However, Addis plans on running for State Assembly in the June Primary Election in a newly-drawn district that includes the coastal cities in Monterey County. If she makes the November run-off election, she may not be able to also run for city council re-election, though the City Clerk has said she was unsure of this and would research it if the situation comes up.

According to the City Municipal Codes, a council member who seeks higher office in mid-term must give up their seat, so the potential vacancy can be voted on at the election. If they do not, they could be made to pay for a special election, if one is called.

The City code was intended for when a council member seeks the Mayor’s job and doesn’t serve out their term. It does not specifically address whether someone could run for, let alone be elected, to both State Assembly and City Council at the same time, which is what the city clerk must research. It would seem counterintuitive to think a person could do both jobs.

Also, Councilwoman Jen Ford, who was appointed last year to the seat of the late-Robert Davis after he died just a few months after winning re-election in November 2020, will face voters in the June Primary.

The winner of that race — assuming she is challenged for it — will serve out Davis’ remaining term and not face election again until 2024’s Presidential Election. If she is unchallenged, the race won’t even appear on the ballot.

November could also have two citizen initiatives on the ballot — one to prohibit RV camping on The Embarcadero and the other to enact a \$120 a year parcel tax on all private property in the City, intended to support the maintenance needs of the Harbor Department.

Petitions for that parcel tax initiative are being gathered now. They have until May to garner some 830 signatures (10%) of registered voters in Morro Bay for it to qualify for the ballot.

The anti-RV camping initiative proponents have already turned in over 1,000 signatures, which the City Clerk and County Elections Office are now working to verify and it seems a lock to make the ballot.

# LAFCo. Approves Panorama Lots Change

By Neil Farrell



The City of Morro Bay’s sphere of influence will include Panorama Drive.

A countywide agency has voted to approve the City of Morro Bay’s request to expand its “sphere of influence” to include a row of lots on Panorama Drive, despite an avalanche of opposition due to landslide concerns.

The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo.)

## Correction

In a story in last edition regarding an attempt by the City of Morro Bay to bring several lots on Panorama Drive into the City’s “sphere of influence,” we incorrectly said the hillside above Panorama had slid in 1988 and damaged several homes. It was actually in 1983 when that occurred.



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voted 5-1 Jan. 20 to approve the City’s SOI request and take a first step in the direction of a future annexation into the City Limits and potential residential development of the 5 lots that total a little over 212 acres.

The “Panorama Lots” are outside the City Limits and in SLO County jurisdiction. The lots are part of Chevron Corp.’s Estero Marine Terminal property (over 3,000 total acres) and the oil giant had asked the City to bring them into the SOI to increase their resale value.

The change is part of a much bigger conservation effort spelled out in a memorandum of understanding that has already seen the purchase and preservation of the Chevron Dog Beach under the City’s ownership, plus a large parcel at Hwy 1 and Toro Creek Road is now part of the County Parks’ purview. The Cayucos Sanitary District played a large part in those land acquisitions.

The MOU also points toward a future conservation project intending to also preserve a large canyon area east of Del Mar Park that is being negotiated now.

For the City, the Panorama Lots are part of an effort to delineate the city’s eastern edge with open space up to the hilltops, and to have control over how and when they are developed.

But residents of North Morro Bay have come out strongly against anything happening on that hillside, owing mainly to the fact that it is geologically unstable and has moved in the past during really wet winters. The hillside also shows signs of soil creep — the gradual movement downhill of soil most easily recognized by fence posts and utility poles leaning downhill.

The hillside above Panorama Drive moved and damaged homes below in 1983, 1995 and 2005, and during rainstorms can experience mudflows that can cover streets.

In 1995, a movement cracked the Whale Rock Pipeline, which runs parallel to Panorama Drive, and led to the Whale Rock Commission rerouting it down to Tide Avenue to avoid the unstable areas.

Citizens’ concerns are that grading and development would destabilize the hillsides and put their properties and very lives into potential jeopardy. The opponents have been busy, garnering over 900 signatures on a petition opposing the SOI change; sending in over 200 public comment emails to LAFCO., before the meeting; and, five of the six public speakers at the Zoom meeting were against it.

LAFCO., took into account all of these concerns but dismissed them as not being under consideration with this SOI application. But the concerns would be addressed if and when the City comes back to LAFCO., with a proposal to annex the lots.

Morro Bay Community Development Director, Scot Graham, told LAFCO., that the intentions are to possibly, some day, annex the lots. He reassured residents that a full geological analysis of the instability issue would have to be

done before anything could be built on any of the lots. He also said the City would not allow anything to be built above the 200-foot elevation line, which Graham said means allowing one single family residence, plus one granny unit, per parcel. State law allows granny units — secondary dwelling units — to be built in all zoning districts, but City codes, policies and ordinances can dictate where development can be situated on the lots.

Ironically, leaving the lots in County jurisdiction triggers the County zoning requirements, and as the lots are currently zoned agriculture, development could include homes, barns and other farm structures. So having the City take control over the Panorama Lots limits development more than the County.

However, the County, faced with a similar issue in Cayucos and the infamous Cayucos “paper lots” located above Chaney Avenue, has declared them too steep and too unstable to build on.

The County has denied development proposals repeatedly and has been buying up and retiring the paper lots through tax lien sales.

City Clears Pot Dispensary, Can Keep License

By Neil Farrell



Photo from April 2021 shows Helios Dayspring with the big scissors cutting the ribbon to officially open the Natural Healing Center’s Morro Bay pot dispensary, in a ceremony organized by the Chamber of Commerce. The woman to the left of Dayspring is his reported girlfriend, Valnette Garcia, to whom he signed over his interests in the company before pleading guilty to charges of bribery and tax evasion. File photo

They lost a marijuana seller’s permit in San Luis Obispo after their founder was busted on bribery and tax evasion charges, but in Morro Bay everything was apparently hunky-dory with the process used to vet and award a marijuana dispensary permit.

The City of Morro Bay last week announced that its investigation into Natural Healing Center (nhc) and its

founder Helios Dayspring, did not uncover any shenanigans in the City’s process to vet and pick the two companies that would be granted licenses to sell marijuana in the city.

Nhc and Perfect Union of Sacramento, in 2020 were awarded licenses to open cannabis retail stores in the city, with Perfect Union opening first in the 1000 block of Quintana Road and nhc opening months later at the corner of Napa Avenue and Morro Bay Boulevard.

But shortly after it opened, nhc was thrust into the spotlight when Dayspring, who grew up in Morro Bay, was arrested by the FBI and charged with bribing Dist. 3 County Supervisor the late-Adam Hill, who committed suicide in fall 2020, and to not paying taxes on millions of dollars in income.

Dayspring, who pled guilty to the charges and is awaiting sentencing, reportedly paid Hill over \$30,000 in cash and supplied free weed as well, in exchange for favorable votes and lobbying for nhc’s attempts to garner permits to grow cannabis in SLO County.

The County limited the number of marijuana plantations that would be allowed in SLO County’s territory making the permits highly valuable and much sought-after.

The Dayspring-Hill scandal led to nhc being stripped of a permit for a dispensary in San Luis Obispo, as that city concluded that Dayspring lied on his application with regards to a question concerning whether there were any criminal activities surrounding the company at the time. The SLO city manager concluded that he was not truthful in the application and stripped nhc of its dispensary permit.

This came after the company sank millions into buying and remodeling a building on Broad Street that was to become the newest store. Nhc also has stores in Grover Beach, Lemoore and Morro Bay and was also planning to open a store in Turlock in Stanislaus County.

SLO’s actions left nhc holding the bag on an expensive building, unable to open and recoup its investment. The company is now suing SLO to have its license reinstated. Their store on Broad Street has never opened.

Dayspring also came under suspicion in 2018 after he hosted a private fundraiser for several local politicians, including the former mayor and a councilwoman in SLO, and in Morro Bay, Mayor John Headding and Councilwoman Dawn Addis. Some questions arose with regards to that fundraiser after Dayspring was arrested but Morro Bay’s candidates had filed the proper paperwork with regards to donations they received.

But while Hill had sway over decisions being made by County Supervisors, the Morro Bay City Council had turned the whole matter over to the staff and played no direct part in awarding the two dispensary permits, outside of passing the governing ordinance and setting the number of dispensaries that would be allowed. They also set the City’s 5% special tax on cannabis sales.

License Continued on page 4

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License From page 3

“The City of Morro Bay’s commercial cannabis operations regulatory program,” reads a news release from the City, “creates a stringent, 3-step procedure to review and evaluate all applicants and/or applications for a commercial cannabis operation permit.

“A determination is not made by a single individual and/or body. Each step of the 3-step procedure is reviewed by a different person and/or committee. It should be noted that the City Council is not involved in any of the review and has no authority over permit issuance.”

Therefore, “The City has concluded its review and determined that Natural Healing Center-Morro Bay properly received its permit to operate a commercial cannabis retailer operation.”

Also, “The City’s internal review concluded that no impropriety occurred during the 3-step process.”

The City’s process, which was developed by the city manager and approved by the council, involved first soliciting applications, followed by a first review of applicants — there were six — by a consultant; followed by an interview process conducted by a panel of city department heads — the police and fire chiefs and finance director — who made independent recommendations to the city manager outside those of the consultant’s.

The City Manager then conducted his own review and made the final decisions on who would be awarded licenses.

Still, the seemingly comprehensive process was challenged in court when one of the companies who didn’t win a permit sued. That company, Connected Morro Bay Blvd., LLC., was the top ranked application by the consultant, but dropped down the list after the city’s panel review, and was ultimately passed over.

The City won that lawsuit in SLO Superior Court, and the decision was also used as evidence in the City’s review of nhc.

In the case, Connected Morro Bay Blvd., LLC. v. City of Morro Bay, et al., “The Honorable Ginger E. Garrett issued an order which set forth that the evidence failed to establish bias on the part of the City in favor of NHC-MB. It further found that the City and/or its officers did not violate any provision of the Morro Bay Municipal Code, or any other law, when awarding the permits,” the City said.

Also, the City’s investigation determined that Dayspring had sold his stake in the company to his girlfriend, Valnette Garcia, before they got the Morro Bay license. “The City further determined Mr. Helios Dayspring has divested himself of all ownership interest in commercial cannabis retailer operation permit holder Natural Healing Center-Morro Bay,” the City said. “Mr. Dayspring is not an employee of, and has no ownership interest in, permit holder NHC-MB.”

The City has a financial stake in its two pot dispensaries, as the projections are that the stores in Morro Bay will generate about \$500,000 a year from the special cannabis tax on their sales.

So it would seem that nhc, which invested over \$1 million to remodel what used to be the home of Mill’s Stationary Store, will hang on to its cannabis license for now, as the City’s licenses were initially granted for five years.

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Canadian Energy Company Gets Cash Infusion

By Neil Farrell

A Canadian company that is seeking to build an energy storage facility in Chorro Valley has gotten a significant infusion of cash from Wall Street for its emerging technology.

The company, Hydrostor, announced Jan. 10 that the investment firm, Goldman Sachs, was making a “preferred equity financing commitment of \$250 million [U.S.] from the Private Equity and Sustainable Investing businesses within Goldman Sachs Asset Management,” reads a news release.

The investment is intended to support the development of Hydrostor’s “Advanced Compressed Air Energy Storage” (A-CAES) in Australia and on farmland near the intersection of Hwy 1 and Canet Road, east of Morro Bay, as well as the company’s efforts to develop the technology worldwide.

“Goldman Sachs,” the release said, “will fund its investment in tranches tied to project milestones to match Hydrostor’s capital needs and accelerate project execution throughout development, construction, and operations alongside Hydrostor’s development partners.”

CEO and Co-Founder of Hydrostor, Curtis VanWalleghem, said: “We are delighted with this investment by Goldman Sachs. It is transformational for Hydrostor and validates the competitiveness of our proprietary A-CAES solution as well as the strength of our pipeline of potential projects.”

Charlie Gailliot, partner and head of “Energy Transition Private Equity Investing” within Goldman Sachs Asset Management, said: “As the world continues transitioning to sustainable and renewable energy sources, the need for utility-scale long-duration energy storage is clear, and Hydrostor’s A-CAES solution is well positioned to become a leading player in this emerging global market. We look forward to working with the Hydrostor team over the coming years and leveraging our firm’s global platform to support Hydrostor’s growth, which will play a central role in the ongoing energy transition.”

VanWalleghem also thanked the firm’s other investors — ArcTern Ventures, Lorex Partners, Canoe Financial, and Business Development Bank of Canada, “all of whom will remain our partners. Hydrostor’s evolution has been made possible by their support and support from various agencies of the Government of Canada.

“I would also like to thank outgoing directors Elisabeth Hivon and Tom Rand for their service and welcome Charlie Gailliot, Sebastien Gagnon, and Gunduz Shirin from Goldman Sachs to our board.”

Hydrostor is focused on California’s long-term energy policies, which include being 100% carbon-free in terms of energy generation, as well as turning away from nuclear

Canadian energy firm, Hydrostar, has proposed building a 400 megawatt energy storage facility on farmland off Hwy 1 at Canet Road at the base of Hollister Peak. The company recently announced a \$250 million investment from Wall Street investment firm, Goldman Sachs. Rendering courtesy Hydrostar

energy such as the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, which is scheduled to cease all operations in 2025, when the second of its two reactors licenses expires.

The A-CAES system, takes excess energy generated mainly by solar plants, and using it to pressurize underground storage tanks with air and water, in essence transforming the electrical energy into stored energy that can them be released gradually to turn turbines and generators and in essence turn the pent-up energy back into electricity that can be fed into the power grid over time.

The 400-megawatt, so-called “Pecho” project outside Morro Bay is being pursued through the California Energy Commission and is being timed to be ready to go online when Diablo Canyon shuts in 2025. It seeks to make further use of the high voltage transmission wires that cross Hwy 1 near the site of the proposed plant, connecting to the power grid via the substation at the MB Power Plant.

The system seeks to address one of the nagging issues with regards to solar and wind energy that the peak generation times don’t quite match up with the demand.

Storing excess energy — through battery projects like the 600MW one proposed for the Morro Bay Power Plant, as well as the A-CAES system — is seen as a way to better match up supply with demand.

“Hydrostor,” the release said, “is a long-duration energy storage solutions provider that provides reliable and affordable utility integration of long-duration energy storage, enabling grid operators to scale renewable energy and secure grid capacity. Hydrostor supports the green economic transition, employing the people, suppliers, and technologies from the traditional energy sector to design, build, and operate emissions-free energy storage facilities.”

Also, “A-CAES uses proven components from mining and gas operations to create a scalable energy storage system that is low-impact, cost-effective, 50+ year lifetime, and can store energy from 5 hours up to multi-day storage where needed.”

CAPSLO to Manage Kansas Homeless Lot

By Neil Farrell

The County has turned over management of its Kansas Avenue safe parking lot for the homeless to a non-profit organization that runs two other such facilities in San Luis Obispo.

County Supervisors approved a \$163,000 contract with Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO), a SLO-based non-profit that runs homeless services for the County and City of SLO. Those homeless facilities and programs include the 40 Prado Road shelters, plus a safe parking program in the Prado Road facility’s parking lot, and another safe lot at the Railroad Station in SLO.

The Prado Road parking program provides six spots; there are 22 at Rail Road Square; and the Kansas lot adds another 52 to CAP-SLO’s oversight.

“Adding the Kansas Avenue Safe Parking site to their Safe Parking program portfolio,” A County report said, “will enhance their safe parking program with the goal of providing homeless individuals a safe place to park their vehicle while working towards their goal of ending their experience of homelessness and gaining economic sufficiency.”

As part of its contract for Kansas, which is a 24/7 facility located off Hwy 1 at the intersection of Oklahoma and Kansas Avenues, across from the County Honor Farm, CAPSLO will also provide on-site case management services, the County report said, “that include assistance with facility service contracts and on-site case manage-

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ment services. Facility services include bathroom, showers, trash and an office to meet with participants [or a shaded bench].”

The money comes out of the “Emergency Solutions Grant Program,” and is designed to aid those who are homeless or about to become homeless.

“Eligible uses of ESG funding,” the report said, “includes outreach to homeless persons, emergency shelter services, homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing, data collection through the Homeless Management Information System [HMIS], and general administration of the ESG program.”

CAPSLO has until next Sept. 30 to use up all the funds, according to the County. If the contract proves successful, “then county staff will seek to find sustainable funds to continue this program into the future.”

The County set up the “Kansas Avenue Safe Parking” lot as it’s formally known, last summer when the issue arose of people essentially camping in RVs and vehicles on city streets — in particular on Palisades Avenue in Los Osos.

Originally allowed as a concession to help cope with the coronavirus pandemic, what used to be a handful of tent campers and RVs on Palisades grew into a mass of humanity that was becoming a blight on the community and piquing the ire of residents.

A sizable number of residents demanded the homeless encampments be sent packing and the County came up with the Kansas Avenue site as somewhere these people could stay and not be bothered.

The lot isn’t ideal, as it is far from convenient. For example, the nearest grocery and convenience stores are on Foothill Boulevard in SLO, about 6 miles away. Driving ones RV off the safe lot to go into town could mean losing your spot, if a person doesn’t also have a car.

There is however, an RTA bus stop located on Kansas Avenue by Hwy 1. There, for a relatively small price, they can catch a bus to anywhere in the county on the RTA system. They must however call RTA and request that a bus stop there, as Kansas Avenue is a “whistle-stop” for RTA.

Also, the County recently approved buying new and much improved portable shower facilities for the Kansas lot. Which, while not exactly a definitive commitment, would seem a step in the direction of making Kansas a permanent program site.

Baywood Inn G.M. Named to County TBID

The general manager of a Baywood Park motel has been appointed to the County Tourism Business Improvement District’s Los Osos Advisory Board for a 4-year term.

County Supervisors appointed Curtis Armstrong, the G.M at The Baywood Inn, to the Visit Los Osos Board at

their Jan. 11 meeting.

The County TBID is funded through a 2% tax on a room night at motels, B&B’s, hotels and vacation rentals located in the County’s unincorporated towns and used for tourism promotions. The lodging properties are represented by a governing board and each community — Cayucos, Cambria, San Simeon, Los Osos, and others — is given half the CTBID taxes collected to spend on promoting events and tourism promotions in their respective communities.

In his application, Armstrong said he earned a bachelor’s of science degree in business administration from California Coast University, an online university based in Santa Ana. He said he has volunteered with CAPSLO, Growing Grounds, and the SLO County Food Bank.

“I am looking to serve on the VLOB Board because I love the Los Osos-Baywood Area and want to give back to the community while promoting and striving for a stronger local economy,” he said.

Because he isn’t the actual owner of the Inn, his employer, J. Alex Benson, signed a nomination paper for him to officially represent the Baywood Inn, which is a member of the CTBID.

Running Water Not a Concern

If readers have noticed water running down Quintana Road and Kings Avenue and think to call the authorities, never mind, it’s the City draining a main water tank in advance of a re-sealing project.

On Friday, Jan. 21, the City Water Department announced that it had begun draining one of its Kings Avenue water storage tanks of the remaining de-chlorinated water from the bottom of the tank.

“The tank is being emptied in preparation for a tank recoating and rehabilitation project,” the news release said, “and the City is only draining out the remaining water from the bottom of the tank.” The water was predicted to simply run down the street into storm drains and should not be a problem.

Ordinarily, under drought conditions like now, the City enacts restrictions on usage, one of which is a prohibition of watering that sends a stream down the gutters of city streets.

This could be caused by anything from ill-set lawn sprinklers, to someone washing their vehicle but possibly a water line break.

Anyone seeing running water in the gutters should report it to the water department, because if there is a leak, they want to get on with repairs as soon as possible.

The Kings Street tank draining was estimated to last a week.

Atascadero Molester Sentenced to Prison

An Atascadero man has been given a long prison sentence for sexually abusing a young girl, the District Attorney’s Office announced last week.

County D.A. Dan Dow announced Dec. 18 that that Fred Knight, 46 of Atascadero, was sentenced to 28-years-to-life in prison and must register as a sex offender for life, after a felony conviction for committing lewd acts and sodomy on a child under-10.

The victim was just 6-years old when the crime took place on Aug. 20, 2018 in Atascadero, the D.A. said. Atascadero Police and D.A.’s Office investigators worked the case and Deputy D.A. Danielle Baker was the prosecutor.

It wasn’t Knight’s first such offense, as the D.A. said he was also convicted of lewd acts on a child back in 2011 and served 3 years. D.A. Dow called him a “sexual predator.”

“Whenever a sexual predator abuses a child,” D.A. Dow said, “he is responsible for inflicting unimaginable and lasting harm on the victim. Sexual predators must be prosecuted to the fullest extent possible under the law to reflect the longstanding pain and suffering their acts inflict on innocent children and to deter others from committing similar horrible crimes.”

The young victim was courageous. “We commend the courage this very young survivor displayed by reporting the abuse and of the family in patiently working through the legal process necessary to hold this predator accountable.”

Last November, Knight pleaded “No contest” to the charges and Superior Court Judge Jesse Marino found him guilty and handed down the lengthy sentence. But the D.A. isn’t sure how long he’ll actually serve, given the topsy-turvy nature of today’s criminal justice system.

“Due to constant changes to California criminal law by the Legislature and by the initiative process,” he said, “it is impossible to predict how much of the 28 years the defendant will serve in prison before being eligible for parole.”

The young victim didn’t testify at the sentencing, but she wrote a speech that the prosecutor read into the record. Dow called it “an impassioned written description of the staggering impact of the crime.”



Fred Knight



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Conviction in Paso Robles Woman’s Murder

A Paso Robles man has been convicted in the May 2018 disappearance and murder of a Paso Robles woman and faces life in prison with parole.

On Jan. 21, District Attorney Dan Dow announced the conviction of Carlo Alberto Fuentes Flores in the murder of Nancy Woodrum, a crime that he confessed to and didn’t contest at trial.



Carlo Fuentes Flores

“On May 5, 2018,” reads a news release from the D.A.’s Office, “Ms. Woodrum went missing from her Paso Robles home, sparking an extensive 6-month missing persons investigation by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office.”

That November, Sheriff’s investigators developed Fuentes Flores, 45, as a suspect in the case and he was brought in for questioning.

“He had been hired to paint Ms. Woodrum’s deck in the weeks leading up to her disappearance,” the release said. “After a lengthy interview, Fuentes Flores led investigators to the victim’s remains in a secluded area off Highway 58 in a rural eastern part of the county.”

Fuentes Flores reportedly opted for a trial by judge and not jury. Superior Court Judge Timothy Covello tried the case and found him guilty of murder with special circumstances, that he killed her while raping her or attempting to rape her, according to the release.

The convictions could mean Fuentes Flores receives life with parole but he is scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 24. The D.A. was pleased with the verdict.

“This conviction will not bring Nancy Woodrum back,” D.A. Dow said, “nor will it lessen the grief of her loved ones. This is however a critical step towards achieving an appropriate punishment for the predator who is responsible for her brutal murder.”

He credited the investigators for cracking what was a puzzling case, with volunteers and law enforcement searching high and low for the well-known businesswoman after she vanished from her home.

“This conviction,” D.A. Dow said, “was only possible because of the immense amount of diligence and unwavering professionalism of the Sheriff’s Office investigative team. Our hearts remain with the Woodrum Family and her loved ones who are suffering the pain of her loss.”

The case was investigated by the County Sheriff’s Office with the assistance of the D.A.’s Bureau of Investigation and was prosecuted by Deputy D.A. Christopher Peuvrelle.

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Possible Paint Job in Los Osos

The Los Osos Community Advisory Council reports that public works will apply for a grant to provide funding for selected members of the community to paint the cabinets that house all the electrical and communication equipment for traffic signals. The grant application is due February 1 and if awarded this grant, the call for projects would likely be in early 2023.

The eight traffic signals in Los Osos that would be painted include:

- LOVR at 9th and 10th (combined cabinet)
- LOVR at Doris Ave
- LOVR at Palisades
- LOVR at South Bay Blvd
- South Bay at El Moro
- South Bay at Nipomo
- South Bay at Santa Ysabel

COVID-19 Cases Decrease, Remain High

Confirmed COVID-19 cases for the latest reported numbers on Jan. 21 declined to 1565, down from 2,967 Jan. 7 -13, the highest level in San Luis Obispo County since the pandemic began. The 14-day daily average rose to an all-time high of 517. A total of 9060 cases have been reported so far in January; this compares to 7,437 for the entire month of January 2021. Four more deaths were also reported making a total of 384 in the county.

County Public Health officials also said that an increase in deaths due to COVID-19 would likely be reported in the coming weeks. Local physicians and coroner staff are working through pending records for more than a dozen recent deaths that attending physicians have noted were caused by COVID-19. These records must be reviewed and certified before they are officially reported through the local data dashboard.

As of the last report, 48 people were currently hospitalized due to severe COVID-19 illness, including 10 in the intensive care unit, and hospitals reported severe pressure on their staff and facilities.

Masking is required in indoor public places in San Luis Obispo County and across California. Medical grade N95/KN95 or surgical masks provide additional protection.

Vaccines are available at no cost at pharmacies, doctors’ offices, Public Health Department clinics, and mobile clinics countywide. To schedule an appointment, visit [slopublichealth.org/vaccines](https://slopublichealth.org/vaccines), or call (833) 422-4255.

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

One Hwy 1 Job Ends; Another Begins

Caltrans has wrapped up work on one Hwy 1 slide area south of Ragged Point, and begun another job further north near the Big Creek Bridge, the agency announced last week.

Work at the so-called “Polar Star” slide area, a mile south of Ragged Point, finished up Saturday, Jan. 22, ending a \$1.8 million emergency contract with Souza Const. And work was slated to begin Monday, Jan. 24 at “Cow Cliffs,” about a mile north of the Big Creek Vista Point (Post Marker 28.2) in Monterey County and last for three weeks.

That job entails repairing permanent, rock fall netting, which drapes a hillside and keeps rocks that do fall from reaching the roadway. Papich Const., has that \$1.3 million contract.

Work at Cow Cliffs will go on from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, and motorist can expect 1-way, reversing traffic controls and delays of up to 15 minutes. But even with the traffic controls, Caltrans said Hwy 1 is open to through traffic from Monterey to SLO County.

Tsunami Warnings Issued


An underwater volcanic eruption near the island nation of Tonga created a pacific-wide tsunami. The morning of Jan. 15, the National Tsunami Warning Center issued an advisory for the entire West Coast of the US, Alaska and Hawaii. While widespread inundation was not expected, the public was advised to move out of the water and off beaches, and away from harbors, marinas, breakwaters, bays and inlets.

Before daybreak, the Morro Bay Harbor Department coordinated with the City of Morro Bay police and fire departments and the US Coast Guard on a united front to address the advisory, according to a City news release. All public beach access points were posted with the advisory language, and the situation monitored. Out of an abundance of caution, the coast guard and harbor patrol took their vessels offshore initially, but have since been recalled. No evacuations were advised or contemplated.


Tsunami surges continued throughout the day, so the public was advised to remain wary and heed the advice coming out of the National Tsunami Warning Center: Move out of the water and off beaches, and away from harbors, marinas, breakwaters, bays and inlets.

The County Offices of Emergency Services posted on Twitter on Jan. 15 that “Port San Luis continues to have some of the largest surges in the sState.” The area reported a 3.1foot surge from the event.

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Paso Shooting was in Self-Defense

A Paso Robles man shot an alleged trespasser in self-defense, and will not be charged, the County Sheriff's Office announced last week.

Sheriff's Spokesman Tony Cipolla said in a Dec. 19 news release that deputies responded at 10:50 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 18 to a report of a shooting in the 14000 block of Chimney Rock Rd., in rural Paso Robles.

Chimney Rock Road is a country southeast of Lake Nacimiento that leads from Godfrey Road to Adelaida, a tiny berg in the coastal mountains some 10 miles from Paso Robles.

"It was initially reported as two trespassers in a car on the property," Cipolla said. "A subject inside a home at that location, 67-year-old Daniel Enriquez David, confronted one of the trespassers. The two got into an argument and David fired a shotgun at the car striking 37-year-old Michael Fordyce of rural Paso Robles."

Though Fordyce was hit in the face and shoulder and was taken to a hospital, his wounds were considered "non-life threatening," Cipolla said. No arrests were made.

"The preliminary investigation," Cipolla said, "indicates the shooting was done in self-defense after Fordyce made threats against David, which caused him to be in fear of his life."

And the "victim" in the shooting, Fordyce, "has remained uncooperative with investigators," Cipolla said.



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Cunningham is Out; Three to Challenge for New Assembly Seat



Dawn Addis



Jon Wizard



Vicki-Nohrden

San Luis Obispo County — or at least most of it — will have a new State Assemblyman after the Republican incumbent bowed out of the race, and the newly formed district picks up a whole lot more Democrats.

Thirty-fifth District Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham announced that he would not seek re-election to the Assembly seat he's held since 2016.

"After talking it over with my wife and kids," Cunningham said in a news release, "I have decided not to seek a fourth term in the State Assembly."

Cunningham, who had been representing the 35th District — which used to include all of SLO County and Northern Santa Barbara County — saw the State Redistricting Commission re-draw the Central Coast District, dividing SLO County near the Southern County Line and lumping it together with Coastal Monterey County up to Capitola near Santa Cruz.

The change swung what has been for decades a Republican stronghold into a district that looks a lot more blue than red.

"It has been a great privilege to represent this community in Sacramento. San Luis Obispo County has been my home for most of my life, and northern Santa Barbara County has been my adopted home."

So far there are three people who have announced

their intentions to run for the new Assembly set.

Morro Bay Councilwoman Dawn Addis, who lost to Cunningham in 2020, and would be up for re-election in 2022, has announced that she will run for the new seat.

Monterey County Republican and businesswoman, Vicki Nohrden, who lost a bid in 2020 for the State Senate to Sen. John Laird has indicated she will challenge for the new seat as well.

And progressive Democrat, Jon Wizard, a Seaside City Councilman and retired first responder, has also launched a campaign.

There may also be others who join the race but no matter how many candidates there end up being, under California's Primary Election system, the top two candidates in the June Primary Election — regardless of party affiliation — will run off at the November General Election. And with the candidates trending 2:1 Democrat, there is a good chance SLO County will have its first ever Democrat Assemblyman.

If readers would like to begin researching the candidates online, Addis' website is at: dawnaddis.org; Wizard's website is at: www.electwizard.com; and Nohrden doesn't appear to have launched a new website as of yet, however, her website for the 2020 State Senate race is still active, see: www.vicki4senate.com, as it gives her relative information on how she stands on the issues, which haven't changed much in California since 2020.

Rotary Refreshes Police Department

Story and Photos By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Members of the Rotary Club of Morro Bay pressure wash the exterior of the police department.

The exterior of the Morro Bay Police Department is starting the year with a clean record thanks to efforts by a local service club.

Members of the Rotary Club of Morro Bay (RCMB) recently spent a few hours pressure washing the 50-year-old building as one of their 2022 service projects.

The idea came out of a project poll among RCMB members who wanted to boost morale for officers and staff.

"We wanted do something for the police department to let them know that they are appreciated by the community and that we're all thinking of them and wishing them well," said RCMB President Tim Olivas. "I think law enforcement had a rough go the last couple years. So we wanted to make sure they knew that their community supported and we're appreciative of them."

After members of the departments suggested cleaning the exterior, Olivas and club members Jeff Jones and Greg Harcastle brought the equipment to the site where Chief Jody Cox and others joined the effort.

"The police department has been in action here for

Rotary Refreshes Continued on page 8



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Police Blotter



• **Jan. 8:** Police responded to a disturbance at 8:19 p.m. in the 300 block of Dunbar where they placed an upset citizen in timeout with County Mental Health.

• **Jan. 8:** Police responded to a reported case of fraud in the 800 block of Main. The loss was a painful \$3,000 no doubt making for an ugly day at the Ugly Mug Ceramics shop.

• **Jan. 8:** Police responded at 1 p.m. to the 1000 block of Front St., where an apparently randy large dog jumped onto a smaller dog, which apparently upset the little one’s owner, who reportedly was injured when he or she tripped and fell. Both dogs were reportedly on a leash.

• **Jan. 8:** Police recovered a vehicle at 12:30 p.m. in the parking lot at Burger King that was reported stolen, no doubt saving the owner a whopper of a headache.

• **Jan. 8:** Someone turned in to police a cell phone they reportedly found on the trail at Harmony Headlands State Park.

• **Jan. 8:** Police responded at 8:21 a.m. to the Morro Bay Chevron station in the 1700 block of Main, where a 72-year-old store clerk said he was assaulted.

• **Jan. 9:** At 2 a.m. police contacted a suspicious fellow in the 700 block of Embarcadero. The 41-year-old swagman had a warrant and was hauled to the hoosegow.

• **Jan. 7:** Police responded to a business in the 1500 block of Main where a citizen said some felonious scoundrel had forged a stolen a check and cashed it for \$4,200.

• **Jan. 7:** Police responded to a traffic collision at 2:45 p.m. at Quintana and Morro Bay Boulevard, as the roundabout claims two more.

• **Jan. 7:** Police responded at 1:17 p.m. to a reported assault in a business in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd. According to logs, a 58-year-old man threatened the store clerk at Megan’s Organic Market, a CBD retail store. The apparently crankypated fellow was arrested and maybe

next time he should shop the pot store down the street to enhance his calm.

• **Jan. 7:** Police responded to a domestic disturbance at 11:30 a.m. in the 700 block of Butte. Logs indicated a 31-year-old ruffian was arrested for suspicion of domestic violence with injury and of course a bench warrant.

• **Jan. 6:** A citizen in the 500 block of Embarcadero reported his or her catalytic converter got snatched off their vehicle.

• **Jan. 6:** Police responded at 2:07 p.m. to a disturbance in the 600 block of Quintana. Logs indicated a 36-year-old bent hombre was nicked for suspicion of being fit-shaded in public.

• **Jan. 6:** At 12:11 p.m. police espied a familiar foe at City Park on Harbor Street. The 59-year-old belle of the ball had five bench warrants. She was issued a sixth disappearance ticket and released.

• **Jan. 6:** At 8:23 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana police contacted another scofflaw fellow, 58, who had three bench warrants. He too was issued a fourth piece of makeshift TP and released.

**Jan. 6:** A burglary was reported at a business in the 800 block of Quintana at 7:51 a.m. Police have no clues in the case.

• **Jan. 5:** Two citizen in the Downtown area reported catalytic converters stolen off their vehicles. The cases were in the 500 block of Dunes and the 1100 block of Monterey.

• **Jan. 3:** Police tried to pull over a suspicious vehicle at 11:45 p.m. at Main and Surf for some undisclosed equipment violation, but the driver reportedly failed to yield.

• **Jan. 3:** Police responded at 5:15 p.m. to a disturbance in the 600 block of Harbor. They arrested a 36-year-old raucous hombre for suspicion of getting stupid in public.

• **Jan. 2:** Police contacted a familiar face at 2:22 p.m. at Main and Driftwood. The 21-year-old scofflaw had a bench warrant and was also allegedly in possession of suspected illegal drugs and yet was cited and released to no doubt go re-up his stash.

• **Jan. 1:** Someone reported a case of suspected alleged child abuse at some undisclosed location committed by some unidentified scamboogah.

• **Jan. 1:** Someone turned in a license plate they’d found in the 800 block of Morro Ave., leaving police to find the poor

fellow before he descends into Hell — the DMV.

• **Jan. 1:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the suspect time of 12:39 a.m. — on New Year’s no less — and cited the 21-year-old rookie for suspicion of driving FUBAR and earning the distinction of being the first DUI of 2022, but probably not the last.

• **Dec. 31:** Someone found something somewhere near Coleman Beach and police will do something with it.

• **Dec. 30:** Police responded to a reported domestic dispute at the Inn at Morro Bay on State Park Road. Logs indicated they arrested a 19-year-old apparent hellcat on suspicion of domestic violence.

• **Dec. 30:** Police responded to a disturbance at 4 p.m. in the 1200 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated an apparent crankypated person was taken in for a 72-hour mental health timeout.

• **Dec. 29:** Police responded at 12:46 p.m. to a disturbance in the 400 block of Quintana. Logs indicated a 40-year-old woman was nicked for suspicion of being bent in public and possession of a suspected can of toluene, which logs described as “dust remover spray” and was checked into the Parkinson Plaza — no doubt dust free. It was her second trip to the gaol in as many days, as on Dec. 27 at noon in the 700 block of Quintana she was nicked for the same two charges, as toluene spray is a hot commodity these days.

• **Dec. 29:** At 11:35 a.m. police detained a 47-year-old man on Hwy 1 for allegedly spray painting graffiti on the Morro Bay Boulevard overpass and thus defacing Caltrans’ property. The graffidiot also had out-of-county arrest warrants on various drugs charges and so was booked into the hoosegow.

• **Dec. 28:** A citizen in the 900 block of Pecho is a bit lighter in the wallet, after they reported losing \$700.

• **Dec. 27:** Police responded at 10 a.m. to the Embarcadero Inn at 456 Embarcadero for a reported theft. According to logs, a 21-year-old sticky-fingered woman walked into the motel’s laundry and stole an employee’s purse. The alleged thief was nicked and sent to the pokey where according to logs, she was later found in possession of suspected methamphetamine, which she’d apparently hidden where the sun don’t shine and the cops won’t search until she hit the lockup. A charge of allegedly bringing a controlled substance into a jail was added to her list of woes.

Rotary Refreshes From page 7



Rotary Club Morro Bay Members and Chief Jody Cox before the pressure wash project began. Pictured are: Greg Hardcastle, Rotary Club of Morro Bay president-riect John Solu, president Tim Olivas, Morro Bay Police Chief Jody Cox, also a MB Rotarian, Michael Williams and past-president Mike Pond.

50-plus years,” Cox said. “As you can tell, over the years it’s been weathered. It says a lot to have the building refreshed and cleaned. Hopefully after we get all this power wash done, we’re going to put a fresh coat of paint on it and really make it presentable. We are probably going to be in it for another few years to come with finances the way they

are. It’s just really important that it looks presentable and is something that that the community can be proud of. It speaks to represent the community well.”

The police department project is multi-layered. The Rotary Club will install a bench in front of the station and will purchase the paint for a mural that is in the planning



The police department after pressure washing. Photo by Tim Olivas

stages for the rear of the building.

In addition to the pressure washing, Rotarian Lori French spearheaded a cookie delivery to the police station and other public service agencies including the harbor patrol and the fire department.

“It’s just another morale boost,” Olivas said, “to let them know, the community appreciates them.”

RCMB’s next project involves a graffiti removal program that would unite other area Rotary clubs in a joint effort. The goal is to have club members available to help remove tagging and the likes using the San Luis Obispo Sheriff’s mobile paint station.

The Morro Bay Police Department is located at 850 Morro Bay Blvd. For more information about the Rotary Club of Morro Bay, go to <https://morrobayrotary.org>.

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By Theresa-Marie Wilson



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Community

Takin' Care of Business From page 9

Smarter, PayByPhone, as well as the previously available HONK mobile apps, to pay for on-street parking. In addition to these four mobile apps, community members can still pay for parking using the City's pay stations located on every block downtown.

"Drivers may already have one of these apps installed on their mobile devices, which is why we partnered with these specific app companies to offer a fast, easy and digital way to pay for parking," said City Parking Programs Manager Gaven Hussey. "Anyone can still pay for street parking using our pay stations as well. To save money, try biking, walking or riding the bus to downtown. If you choose to drive, you can also save money by parking in one of our three public parking structures, where the first hour is free and the daily maximum parking fee is just \$6."

Use your mobile device to download any of the four apps from the Apple AppStore or Google Play Store. Street parking is enforced Monday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., including holidays. Rates may vary depending on where you park and which app you use.

For more information, visit [www.slocity.org/parking-guide](http://www.slocity.org/parking-guide).

Rock Harbor Wins



Rock Harbor Marketing (RHM), a Morro Bay-based advertising and marketing agency, was awarded the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department's anti-tobacco public awareness campaign at the close of last year.

In their continuing efforts to promote smoke-free air and a tobacco-free environment for all people in San Luis Obispo County, the County Public Health Department's Tobacco Control Program (TCP) is tasked with educating, advocating, and developing policy to achieve a tobacco-free community that enhances the health of San Luis Obispo County.

"Helping to create a tobacco-free community is a mission near and dear to my heart," said Travis Ford, president of Rock Harbor Marketing. "My Dad passed away a few years ago from severe complications after a lifetime of tobacco use. Sadly he never had the desire to quit. If I can help spare even a few of my friends and neighbors from going through a similar traumatic end-of-life experience, then everything we're doing here will be worth it. It's scary how the tobacco industry uses bright colors, fun flavors, and tech devices to hook our youth on nicotine. If we all work together, we can spread the word to make sure every parent is aware of how the tobacco industry profits for a lifetime of use by hooking kids on flavored nicotine."

To learn more about the county tobacco control program, go to [slocounty.ca.gov/Tobacco](http://slocounty.ca.gov/Tobacco). For more information about Rock Harbor, go to [rockharbormarketing.com](http://rockharbormarketing.com).

*Are you or a neighbor Taking Care of Business? Submit your awesome local efforts for publication here. Is your business supporting our community? Maybe you're launching a new business, or you're making updates to your current business model, or re-opening. Or perhaps you have a job opportunity, or have been doing some volunteer work, or are collaborating with another business or a non-profit. Or maybe you know someone who is. Fill out our online form at [EsteroBayNews.com](http://EsteroBayNews.com).*



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Lion's Donate to Del Mar School

By Neil Farrell



From left, Lion's Club District Representative David Hubbard, Del Mar Elementary School first grade teacher Samantha Montoya, Morro Bay Lion's Club President Chuck Stoll and Del Mar Principal Michael Wood stand by some of the \$1,000 worth of supplies the Lion's donated to Del Mar's Computer Lab. Photo by Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay Lion's Club, fresh off being named the 2022 "Non-Profit of the Year" by the Chamber of Commerce recently spread their goodwill to the local elementary school.

Lion's Club President, Chuck Stoll, himself the 2021 Citizen of the Year, was on hand to donate \$1,000 to Del Mar Elementary School, part of a campaign of giving by the statewide organization, and one of just a handful of grants awarded in the program.

David Hubbard, who sits on the California Lion's Club Foundation, said the organization decided to give out 1-time educational grants for "back to school" necessities. "Each area was given \$2,500 to work with," Hubbard said. Twenty-eight Lion's Clubs — two per district, came forward with grant proposals and Del Mar got one of just 36 available.

Hubbard said they wanted to focus on STEM-related educational things and the Del Mar lab fit their bill. He said the back to school grants are a 1-shot thing. "Most schools ask for classroom supplies. We talked about STEM."

The other grant in the district, he said, went to Fillmore Middle School in Ventura. He said the local Lion's Clubs had to put together an action plans for the grant monies, which were reviewed by a committee and while he sits on that committee, he said he had to recuse himself from voting on this district's proposals. But he knew the criteria back and forth and so was able to help them put together a winning application.

Del Mar Principal Michael Wood said they wanted to use the grant monies in their computer lab. He explained that the San Luis Coastal School District Foundation built the computer labs at the district's elementary schools and Del Mar's is located in what years ago was the school kitchen, after a big remodel about 20 years ago turned what used to be the cafeteria and multi-purpose room into a library.

The lab is stocked with various things that get depleted with use. Among them are wood pieces that are used with the lab's laser printers and Plastilina, a modeling clay.

He said with the computer lab the kids can be creative, open-ended and entrepreneurial. "They can experiment, test, analyze and re-think their work," Wood said. The décor and colors used in the lab are key. For kindergarten through fifth grade kids, he added, it's how they respond when they walk in the room. "Even the look of the room is exciting to the kids," Wood said. "It fuels a kid's imagination. It literally lights them on fire."

The motto of the lab is "Innovation — The future is a place we create."

Local Lion's President, Stoll said of the lab, "There's a lot of motivation for these kids."

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Join the Cayucos Land Conservancy and guide Sally Krenn for an informational walk at the tide pools on Jan. 30 at 2 p.m. Learn about the fascinating animals and plants in the intertidal reef, and how to use "tide pool etiquette" so our access to this interesting and delicate ecosystem does not harm the invertebrates and seaweeds that thrive along our coast.

Krenn is a retired biologist from Pacific Gas & Electric and has conducted research in the intertidal and subtidal areas located along the Diablo Canyon Coastline. She is currently a volunteer for State Parks and has led numerous tide pool walks along the Montana de Oro coastline. Currently on the board for the Bay Foundation, she is an advocate for the protection of these intertidal areas.

Learn about the fascinating animals and plants in the intertidal reef, and how to use "tide pool etiquette" so our access to this interesting and delicate ecosystem does not harm the invertebrates and seaweeds that thrive along our coast.

Meet at the 6th Street public beach access. Wear closed-toe beach shoes and prepare to get wet. Rain cancels. Rain date March 26 at noon.

...

SLO Skiers, a local, non-profit sports and social club for adults holds its next monthly meeting at Dairy Creek Golf Course Clubhouse in San Luis Obispo at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 2. Meetings are free and yearly membership is \$50. Social and sports activities occur year round.

The Estrella Warbirds Museum, 4251 Dry Creek Road, Paso Robles hosts a dinner and guest speaker on the first Wednesday of each month. Bart Topham is the guest speaker at the Feb. 2 dinner and will talk about the Central Coast Veterans Memorial Museum where he is the president and director. He is a US Army Vietnam combat veteran, retired San Luis Obispo Police Department captain, and former Cuesta College chief of police. After his retirement in 2003 he operated his own consulting business, working with local governments and law enforcement agencies throughout the state. He retired again in 2018. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with a no host bar (cash only, no credit cards), and dinner starts at 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$20 per person. Space is limited, so make your reservations now by calling the museum at 805 296-1935 or online at [www.ewarbirds.org/museum/reservations.shtml](http://www.ewarbirds.org/museum/reservations.shtml). The deadline for reservations is 8 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 31.



...

The first show of the Melodrama's 2022 season, "Muskie Love" puts a 21st century spin on Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." It's filled with songs, schemes, and soliloquies in yellow cheese hats, all of which are sure

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Community



to lure in guests from 5 to 95. It all takes place at 1863 Front St., Oceano on Wednesdays-Sundays starting Jan. 27 through March 12.

Perch-ance, will Ben and Bea find true roe-mance while fishing on the shores of Lake Michigan in Door County, Wisconsin? Both have a deep love of angling (and fish puns), but very little love for each other. Still, their friends are scheming to get them hooked on one another. Well, the course of true love never did run smooth, don't cha know!

Doors open 30 minutes before showtimes. Tickets can be purchased at the door with prices starting at \$24 and discounts for season pass holders. For more information, including details about tickets and discounts, visit [www.americanmelodrama.com](http://www.americanmelodrama.com).

Morro Bay Art Association, 835 Main Street, presents the workshop Collage Transfer Techniques with artist Vicky Hoffman on Saturday, February 19 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Create inspirational art by delving into the many collage transfer techniques.

Vicky will demo some of her favorite techniques, including some of the fussy applications. Transfers can enhance your work with wonderful depth and transparency.

The cost is \$75 Members; \$85 Non-Members for this one-day workshop. All materials are included. Participants are encouraged to bring an apron and inspirational material of aroundthree items. Reserve your space online: [artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/shop/](http://artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/shop/)



The Central Coast Polo Club is hosting 4 middle school and high school teams from Gilroy, Santa Barbara, Los Osos and San Luis Obispo on Jan. 29 and 30. Players are in



the 7-12th grade and have been preparing since September for the regional tournament.

Participants bring school horses and compete Saturday at 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. The winner will win a seed to Regionals at Empire Polo in LaQuinta, CA the 11-13 of February. Players play 4 different horses in each 7-minute chukkar or period.

Central Coast Polo Club is a non-profit and supported by local businesses such as Richardson properties, Sylvester's Burgers, Kuma Sushi, Doghouse Promotions, Elder Placement Professionals. Photo by Essence is of Hunter Kilpatrick.

Art Center Morro Bay presents the six-session class The Road to Mastery: Lessons in Beginning Drawing with Marie Ramey on Feb. 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 18. This is a foundational beginning drawing class designed to teach basic drawing skills and on which more advanced skills can be developed. In six 2-hour classes participants will learn the following:

1. How to enhance the illusion of what is near and far on the same page using the tricks of the masters
2. How to draw a formal still life
3. How to make your own choices in a drawing
4. How to do a contour drawing
5. How to make convincing illusion using a variety of values
6. How to use the creative effects of 2-point perspective

Supplies needed: jumbo vine charcoal, compressed charcoal, hard eraser (pink pearl is good), Conte (red or brown red, black, and white) and a 6B Pencil. The cost is \$130 per member and \$140 per non-member. For more information and to register, go to [www.artcentermorrobay.org](http://www.artcentermorrobay.org).



For the 18th year Volumes of Pleasure Bookshoppe will host a celebration of Chinese New Year in front of the store, 1016 Los Osos Valley Road, on Saturday, Jan. 29 at 3 p.m. Masks are required.

Once again, the Cal Poly Lion Dance Team and Band will skillfully and enthusiastically perform the centuries-old Lion Dance ritual; both to bless our community and delight the many attendees.



This is the Year of the Water Tiger, which combines the energy of the tiger with the flow of water. The water element brings sensitivity and creativity to the vitality of the tiger. Water is powerful enough to conquer fire; it can navigate obstacles, yet never lose its way. Between the energy of the tiger and the momentum of water, 2022 is a good year to explore and learn new things, be adaptable, and continue to move, ever forward.

In times past, the lion dance was used to scare away monsters and evil spirits. It is now done to bless and empower businesses and our community with prosperity, health, long life, and good luck.

For more information, call Volumes of Pleasure Bookshop at 805-528-5565.

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

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# OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS



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

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

Dust It All Off  
By Susan Vasquez



A trail at Montaña de Oro.

Writing. Walking. Breathing. Living. It’s all changed so much in these past two years that I hardly know where to begin. I am out of practice with nearly everything that was my normal life two years ago. How about you?

Once, twice, three or four times, I have made plans to walk across Northern Spain on the ancient road that humanity has walked for millennia. I have always wanted to place my footsteps where other people, for years beyond my comprehension, have placed theirs. I’ve done this in a couple locations on the planet, but I have not walked El Camino Compostela, perhaps the most well-worn of these ancient paths.

It’s an unnecessary indulgence. What can be better than having Black Hill to climb at my convenience? Montaña de Oro’s Valencia Peak, Morro Bay’s tidelands, the dunes along Estero Bay? There is so much here within this neighborly view, if I really just want a good walk, all I have to do is stay home and head out my front door.

Salt spray, glorious weather, views that inspire good health. People from all over come here to experience what I have as a gift every day. Wouldn’t it be selfish to even think of stretching my thoughts to another part of the world, when I have already seen so much and am lucky to live in a

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safe paradise?

But most of us have had a lot of staying home. And many of us are restless. For young people, they may feel like their days to settle into life are dwindling amid the need to keep a distance. For older ones like me, our days are simply dwindling.

It’s time for something: some plan, some idea, some venture. I can feel the urgency. During my morning routine, I can’t quite get to the routine because of a restless thought. It makes me pace by my front window wanting a different view. It’s then I know I should stop counting the days and begin counting the pennies it will take to get me moving on. I don’t know where this re-born journey will lead me. I don’t know if it will be mental exercise or physical. Or both. Maybe there will be months of preparation where all I have is the joy of walking with a fresh mindset in my own neighborhood.

Maybe I will be braver than I have been lately and ven-

ture out for some longer treks. There is that trail that has pulled my interest, but not my feet, that heads away from the Montaña de Oro headlands toward the lighthouse in the distance. But first, maybe I should tackle the crest of the hill above the Museum of Natural History at the head of the estuary. There is so much to explore along the way.

Maybe I will travel in September 2022 to France, then Spain, then back home, having walked one step at a time down an ancient path. Maybe life, as it has done for the last little bit, will break my path and turn me in an unplanned direction.

Let the journey begin. It’s just one foot in front of the other, as always.

Good luck to all of you on your paths.

*Susan Vasquez has taken walks in many of the world’s most interesting spots, but especially enjoys her strolls around Estero Bay. She is the author of four books and blogs at One Small Walk.*



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KEVIN O'CONNOR, President

## New offerings at Buttercup, starting Jan. 18th



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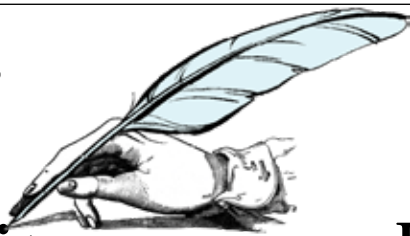
**Brunch menu including new drink options offered on weekends, beginning Friday, Jan. 21st.**

Our new menu will be highlighting the local produce and products our amazing community has to offer!

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Letter's  
To  
The Editor



MLK Scholarship BBQ  
Canceled, Donations  
Critical

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

Usually, but nothing is "usual" anymore. A local tradition for many years, the annual barbecue raises money for The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. High School Memorial Scholarship Fund. Since 1968, the organization has awarded hundreds of scholarships to college-bound teens from local high schools. But because of health and safety precautions brought about by COVID-19, the annual chicken barbecue must be postponed for yet another year.

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

Amid the pandemic, special challenges face students who are graduating from high school and setting their sights on college. California Community College enrollment dropped 15% during the 2020-21 school year, primarily because of financial hardships brought about by COVID-19, and schools across the country report that students' ability to pay for college continues to be affected.

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

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

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

Yes, good things are worth waiting for. But while you're waiting, local college-bound students are depending on you. Please donate now.

Mary Matakovich

Board president of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.  
High School Memorial Scholarship Fund

Thanks for the Help

People Helping People of Los Osos wishes to thank all of our friends in the community for their support of the rummage sales, Need N' Wishes fundraiser, and The Salvation Army Bell ringing donations. They were a huge success and with your help we were able to help support the 40 Prado Homeless Services Center and the SLO Noor Foundation Clinics, which provide free medical, dental and vision care to uninsured adults.

People Helping People distributes food every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. and has been doing so since 1972. We also lend out medical equipment from our office in The South Bay Community Center, and part of your donations also helps support the Community Center itself.

If you wish more information please call us at 805 528-2626. We are open on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Marlene McQueen  
Los Osos

National Marine Sanctuary  
Needs Modifications

In response to recent articles and letters in support of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, I would like to provide some history on the topic.

In 1990, the City of Morro Bay joined with SLO County in a resolution supporting the concept of a Central Coast National Marine Sanctuary in order to stop offshore oil development. Even then, it was a controversial subject because our local fishermen feared that it would mean more regulation or limitation of their fishing options.

In 1992, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) was formed. The formation documents specified that there was no intent to regulate fishing, and there was a promise that local citizens would be strong participants in the Sanctuary's management. Unfortunately, the National Marine Sanctuary Program has not lived up to those promises.

In 2001, when expansion of the MBNMS to include the Central Coast was suggested, I contacted Monterey Councilwoman Ruth Vreeland (now deceased), an ardent environmentalist who had been instrumental in the creation of the MBNMS. Vreeland told me she regretted her support for establishing the Sanctuary. She stated that the impacts of the Sanctuary had negatively affected not only fishing, but also dredging, and visitor-serving businesses in Monterey.

She was particularly offended by Sanctuary management's authority over its citizen's Sanctuary Advisory

Council (SAC), specifically control of the agenda, selection of councilmembers, and that decisions were made in Washington D.C. without giving any consideration to the suggestions and concerns of the local community. In fact, the SAC members were prohibited from communicating directly with elected officials unless given specific permission from the federal management staff. As a result of this and other information, the Morro Bay City Council opposed expansion of the MBNMS, but supported the concept of a separate sanctuary with binding local control.

By 2003, a slightly different Morro Bay City Council, with increased concerns over the MBNMS attempts to impose fishing regulations, as well as the continued unresponsiveness to the local community, passed Resolution 27-03, opposing expansion of the MBNMS and also opposing creation of a Central Coast Marine Sanctuary.

As a direct result of the 2003 Sanctuary expansion controversy, the Marine Interest Group (MIG) was created. This group of local stakeholders, which included fishermen, scientists, environmentalists, elected officials and other concerned citizens, provided a venue for discussing sanctuary issues, fishing impacts, and protection of our valuable coastal resources. While no final resolution was reached, the process was an example of how we can work together to protect our coast without adding federal controls.

In 2012, another Morro Bay City Council, concerned with efforts again being made by the local Sierra Club and others to establish a Central Coast Sanctuary, and awareness of the continued problems faced by Monterey's fishing industry and Santa Cruz' harbor dredging, passed Resolution 18-12 reiterating the City's opposition to a sanctuary without guaranteed local control.

The current Sanctuary proposal, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, makes the same promises made by the MBHMS to not regulate fishing or dredging. But once established and under federal control, Morro Bay and Port San Luis will have no authority to keep those promises from being broken again.

Recognizing this, the current Morro Bay City Council again voted to oppose the Sanctuary. Their decision, however, includes the possibility of support if some specific additions are made, including designating commercial fishing as a protected resource and establishing a 5-mile offshore boundary to protect Morro Bay's essential annual dredging and potential wind farm project. The most important addition would be the requirement that the Sanctuary Advisory Council be comprised of a panel of local stakeholders who will be directly impacted by its provisions, and that they be guaranteed binding authority in management decisions.

The addition of these provisions could resolve many of the continuing concerns, and now is the time to support their inclusion in the Chumash Heritage Sanctuary management proposal. Hopefully the Sanctuary proponents will appreciate and encourage these modifications.

Janice Peters  
Former mayor of Morro Bay

Police Blotter Praise

Whoever does the writing for the police columns, he or she is to be "slapped on the back with praise." What a great sense of humor. I had never read that particular column, but just happened to see some words that "popped" out at me and forced me to read the entire section.

I loved it. Looking forward to the next paper.  
Andy Schwartz  
Morro Bay

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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](mailto:editor@esterobaynews.com)

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**WRF Plant** From page 1  
violations and called for more ground cover and straw waddles in a second NOV issued in December.

The issues prompted the City’s construction contractors — Filanc/Black & Veatch — to take corrective actions, even though the City’s name was on the NOV’s and Carollo Engineering is project manager.

“The City of Morro Bay’s Water Reclamation Facility,” reads a news release from Kwolek, “is subject to regulatory oversight and enforcement by the Regional Water Quality Control Board for storm water pollution prevention plan compliance. However, the City’s contract with the design-build contractor places the responsibility for meeting regulatory requirements, addressing any enforcement actions or Notices of Violations, and payment of any fines associated with SWPPP compliance on the design-build contractor.”

To correct the matter, the contractors have, “installed several miles of straw waddle and silt fence,” Kwolek said, “and hundreds of tons of import gravel, aggregate base and other temporary road surface materials.” They have also submitted a written technical report — complete with photos and descriptions of the actions taken. The jobsite covers some 17 acres.

As for the ground cover, Kwolek explained that they hydro-seeded many of the areas in the NOV, but with no rain, the seed didn’t take. “The design-build contractor again hydro-seeded applicable areas in November 2021, in advance of the December 2021 rains,” Kwolek said. “There is an expectation that this second round of hydro-seeding will be more effective due to the recent rains and due to regrowth observed as of the date of this notice [Jan. 22].”

The NOV’s point out that if the violations — essentially violations of the Clean Water Act — were not corrected they could hand down administrative fines for up to \$10,000 a day for each violation. “Alternatively, a court may impose civil liability of up to \$25,000 for each day the violation occurs.”

With the corrective actions taken, the specter of huge fines hanging over the job have been avoided.

Estero Bay News asked the water board if they were satisfied? Phillip Hammer, a senior environmental scientist with the board’s Stormwater Program said, “We reviewed the City’s latest report and found it to be satisfactory. While the report shows the City corrected the violations we identified, the City needs to take continual actions to control erosion and sediment, in order to adjust to changing construction site conditions and remain in compliance.”

So far the water board has inspected the WRF plant site three times and Hammer added, “We plan to conduct an additional inspection this winter. For some perspective, we regulate approximately 600 construction sites at any given time with limited staff.”

Kwolek clarified the NOV’s. “If the regional board identifies concerns, the City is required to address them. According to the regional board, we did that to their satisfaction after their second notice.

“Nevertheless, the regional board may inspect our performance on the SWPPP at their discretion at any point in the future. As such, the City and the project management team continue to work with the design-build contractor to maintain compliance through changing construction site conditions.”

At this time, the WRF treatment plant jobsite is in compliance but the City had another issue with the water board concerning the existing treatment plant on Atascadero Road.

“The regional board did, however, issue the City a fine about nine months ago,” Kwolek revealed, “due to a discharge of chlorinated water at the existing wastewater treatment plant [i.e., unrelated to the WRF] that happened when the sodium bisulfate system malfunctioned. This issue was subsequently addressed.”

Such minor violations are not uncommon for treatment plants, which must adhere to specific limitations on everything to do with treatment and discharge of wastewater.

EBN asked the water board to rank the WRF project’s adherence to its permit but it declined to do so. “A singular ranking is inappropriate,” Hammer said, “because of the consistently changing conditions at the site and the fact that our observations are limited to particular timeframes.”

**Anti-Catalytic** From page 1

single night (see the Police Logs).

Bill Todd of Todd’s Garage, an automotive repair and smog check station shop at 972 Quintana Rd., in Morro Bay, has invented a gizmo to thwart these thieves.

“We have a new device to deter catalytic converter thefts on mainly Prius vehicles,” Todd said, adding that they are able to modify the devices for use on other makes and models as well. Todd’s Garage first started installing the devices, named, “CAT ARMOR,” last March, he said, building them one-at-a-time.

The CAT ARMOR “protects the bolts from being removed and has a plate that deters the thieves from cutting off the rear of the catalytic converters,” he said. “The part has a ‘provisional patent’ and my CAT ARMOR trademark is pending.”

They’ve since found a local company to manufacture the devices, so they now carry them in stock.

He’s produced a how-to video for YouTube (see: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQrIpL2q\\_BQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQrIpL2q_BQ)) that walks you through the installation process, which Todd said a person could do themselves with just one wrench.

The video, “shows how easy it is to install for someone that would like to save money and install it themselves,” he said. “Or we can install them for \$262.50.”

The CAT ARMOR isn’t a brand new idea. Other such anti-theft products have been on the market for some time. But if the growing number of thefts — a nationwide problem but most frequently committed in California — is any indication, having more products available can only help with what’s a swiftly growing crime.

**Jazzman** From page 1

It was then that music really became important to me. He was a special teacher and many of his students have stories like that.”

But McCarley understood he needed to be his own advocate to grow as a musician. He expanded his education and practice time beyond the classroom. “An important gig I got was playing at the Palace Grill in Santa Barbara. I played there every weekend for 10 years. Having a ‘regular’ gig was so important for me to keep learning and to see myself as a musician.”

He continued to study and then teach at Santa Barbara Community and Westmont colleges, but it was coordination of “street players” that built his network and public experience. “Another important gig for me was playing at the Paseo Nuevo Mall in Santa Barbara for a few years. I would wait until a few days before the gig and then call all the best musicians I could find to play with me. The gig didn’t pay well, but if I didn’t call too early, people would do it if they didn’t have something else. I was the worst guy in the band every Saturday, but I learned so much playing with those guys.”

Being present and out there playing with others paved the way to playing some big events, “...like the Hollywood Bowl, recording at Capital Records and for great musicians at the PAC (Cal Poly’s Performing Arts Center).”

However, McCarley realized life sometimes requires a re-set of priorities. Today he balances his time with his wife, Laura and six children living near Morro Bay, teaching, performing with his band and others, plus operating his instrument rental and repair business, Ron’s Music Studio. Contact [ron@ccflutes.com](mailto:ron@ccflutes.com).

“We came to SLO when I got the job at Cuesta. I started looking for a fulltime teaching position when my first son was born so we could get health insurance!”

McCarley currently plays with Royal Garden Swing Orchestra, Starlight Dream Band, Jump Jax, and Ron McCarley Jazz Quartet, but there are additional projects he hopes will materialize like Chorro de Ouro, Human Nation and Sugar Daddy Swing Kings.

He prefers playing his saxophone, but he learned being flexible and diversified garnered more gigs. “I’m a ‘doubler.’ I play, soprano, alto, tenor and bari sax, flute, alto flute, piccolo and Bb clarinet. So much of my opportunities have been con-

Last December, the San Jose Police Department reported that catalytic converter thefts just in that one city went from 84 in 2019 to 784 in 2020, and 1,087 through the end of October 2021. That’s a 1,200% increase in less than 2 years.

The most targeted models for theft are Toyota Prius, Honda Element, Honda Accord, Ford Econoline, Honda CRV, Ford F-250, Toyota Tundra, Toyota Sequoia, Ford Excursion, Lexus SUVs, and the Toyota Tacoma. And with the growing popularity of these eco-friendly hybrid vehicles, the temptation for thievery will only increase.

It takes a thief with the right tools just a few minutes to cut off and steal a catalytic converter and when done in the dark of night, it’s a relatively easy crime to get away with.

And the crime can be lucrative, too. Illicit metal recyclers typically pay between \$50-\$250 for one and the precious metals — Platinum, Rhodium and Palladium — used in hybrid vehicles’ converters can bring a thief up to \$1,500 each.

But is protecting the catalytic converter on your vehicle worth the investment for something like Todd’s CAT ARMOR device? It would seem to depend on whether or not your insurance policy is going to replace the one that was stolen.

Comprehensive policies should cover the loss but — given the typical deductibles involved plus other potential damage done by the thieves — you won’t get off pain-free.

A typical replacement converter for a “second-generation

**Kids Cove** From page 1

City new budget had some \$50,000 available for community grants that included \$25,000 from the \$1.1 million the City received from the Federal Government’s COVID relief monies (the City is expecting another \$1.1 million next summer). The association applied for \$5,000, he explained, and it was awarded.



Director of Jazz Studies at Cuesta College, Ron McCarley,

nected to my teaching at Cuesta. I’ve played with Diane Schure of Manhattan Transfer and the Temptations at the PAC. I think if I were still in Santa Barbara, they would have just brought people up from LA and I wouldn’t have gotten to do those.”

McCarley added, “SLO is hard because it is still relatively small for what we have. For the good or the bad of it, we are stuck with most of the same people for everything. Everyone is so nice that musicians should have no trouble finding a place. The groups I play in are established bands and we don’t really hold auditions. If someone couldn’t play anymore, we would probably hire someone we know to be the right kind of player (we need).”

Counsel McCarley gives his students, “The hardest thing is to keep focused and keep trying. There really are so many opportunities, but we sometimes get stuck doing the same things over and over.” Whether COVID-19, connecting with other musicians or finding balance, “It is always a challenge. Even just practicing is hard. I have put concerts on at my house because I really wanted to play. I have joined groups I lead at Cuesta to keep my playing up. COVID has been very hard for music, but having a fulltime job and four kids is also very challenging! It is important to have priorities when times are hard. I keep hanging on to my own music for the sake of my students and because I really feel that it is an important part of who I am.”

Coming up McCarley will direct the SLO County High School Honor Jazz Band on Saturday Jan 29 at 3 p.m. and then on February 5, 1-4 p.m. he joins in with Jump Jax at Broken. Readers wanting to join one of his Cuesta College classes, should check out [www.Cuesta.edu](http://www.Cuesta.edu).

“Prius (older models) can cost \$2,500 and a third-generation Prius converter (newest models) can go for \$5,000. And while it might seem they must be made of gold to cost so much, there is perhaps thankfully no gold used in a catalytic converter.

Hybrid vehicles — with both a gasoline engine and electric motor — require catalytic converters with a higher concentration of precious metals than those found on gasoline-only cars. A 2007 Prius converter costs about \$1,022 today, compared to \$143 for the converter used on a Ford F-150 from the same model year.

The most expensive catalytic converters come on the Ferrari F430, with a price tag of \$3,770.

In posts on the Internet, tips are given to battle these thieves. They are:

- Etch your license plate number onto your catalytic converter. This makes the part identifiable to law enforcement in case it gets recovered, as with the recent Morro Bay P.D. case;
- Park in well-lit areas (or better yet, in the locked garage); and,
- Install an anti-theft device.

If readers would like to speak with Bill Todd about his CAT ARMOR device, call the garage at: 805-772-1985 or book an appointment online at: [toddsgaragewebsite.com](http://toddsgaragewebsite.com). There’s also a link to the YouTube video on the website’s home page.

The block and tackle exhibit has long been a part of the Maritime Museums’ offerings when its exhibits were set up during Harbor Festival dating far back into the 1990s.

The simple exhibit consists of several equal weights, rigged to lift with a rope and pulley. The different stations make it easier and easier to lift the dead weight illustrating the scientific principal of leverage with the block and tackle.

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The knot tying station, Mather said, Jim Bennington, a local fellow, built the exhibit, which passes on the tradition of knot tying, which has played a large part in maritime history worldwide.

They've also added an exhibit featuring an early 1-cylinder marine engine, dating back to the early days of the 20th Century and the beginnings of powerboats.

But it's the cannon exhibit that really catches the eye.

John Burgener, a retired contractor, is chiefly responsible for the cannon exhibit. He explained that one day he called Keith Kelsey, formerly of Sylvester's Tug Service and now with the family's Kelsey Vineyards winery, and laid it on thick, saying that since he was a little kid he always wanted to have a cannon.

"He said to come on over and we'll drink some wine and talk about," said Johnny Spindrift, who got his nickname for

the massive amount of work he did restoring the Monterey-style fishing boat, Spindrift, now on display at the museum. The Spindrift is one of several boats that Burgener has restored.

He was able to talk Kelsey, who is a member of the museum association board, out of one of the ancient cannons on display at the See Canyon winery.

He originally intended to put it on display at the Yacht Club. But it didn't quite fit in at the Yacht Club, he said, "So I decided it should go here."

The cannon was salvaged off the coast of Florida some time ago and Burgener said it is of British design and probably from the 16th Century (1700s).



Maritime Museum Association President Scott Mather.

"It's been underwater for 500 years," Burgener said. "Just think the last person that lit that fuse went down with the ship."

Given that it is so old, and it's true origins unknown, it's entirely possible the cannon is actually from a pirate ship in the Caribbean. It was on display for years in a restaurant in Florida.

But how should it be displayed? Burgener said the idea for the display, "Came to me at 3 in the morning." He decided to recreate a cannon compartment, as it would have looked when the cannon was operable. He needed the right wood to build it.

He visited with Glenda Boatman, whose late husband Don Boatman had milled some special wooden planks. Burgener laughed, "She gave it away and I absconded with it."

Mrs. Boatman was touched when he told her what he wanted to do with the wood. "She got teary-eyed," he said, "knowing that his [Deon's] work would be put to something good."

The result, which he admits is still a work-in-progress, is modeled after the cannon battery of an old sailing ship, with the gun port opening and mounted on a carriage with wheels.

Loaded with lead balls and powered by gunpowder, the cannon would recoil back but kept by a breech rope from flying back across the ship's deck. The cannon barrel would then be doused with a wet cloth (to kill any remaining embers inside), packed with powder, wadding, cannon ball (or chains), and then more wadding to make sure the ball doesn't roll out of the cannon.

It would then be pulled back into place for firing through the gun port on the sides of a vessel — then repeat.

Burgener's display also recreates the outside of the ship, up to a decorative railing, complete with holes in the flanks



A display showing the way a block and tackles works (foreground) and a display on tying sailor's knots, as also part of the Kids Cove at the Morro Bay Maritime Museum.

where the ship took fire.

Burgener said it took him a month or so to build the scene and the Association still has a few touches, such as a stack of cannon balls, to add to it. "It was a lot of work," Burgener said. "But it was a lot of fun."

Mather said work is also underway on two other major projects for the museum. They hope to get the City to allow them to move a small "fishing shack" that's on private property down by the launch ramp, to a spot at the museum. The owners have agreed to donate it and he said they hope the City will expand their footprint to include that unused area.

They will need a house mover to bring it down the Embarcadero, which thankfully, has no overhead utility lines to deal with.

Another project would install a Quonset hut that someone in town wants to donate, for a movie theater and exhibit building, greatly expanding the museum's footprint. The issue there however, is that the Harbor Department has several RV camping spaces where they want to put the hut.

And while a group of citizens is trying to put a measure on the ballot that would prohibit camping anywhere on The Embarcadero and at Morro Rock, there's some confusion as to whether the site, in the so-called Triangle Lot, would fall under that potential ban.

Mather points out that the Maritime Museum's mailing address is listed on The Embarcadero (1210 Embarcadero), even though the actual location is really on Front Street.

Both of those projects will take a significant amount of support and if readers want to find out more about the Morro Bay Maritime Museum, see: morrobaymaritime.org.



California's coastline is protected by 19 Federal & State laws.

Adding an NMS designation for our local waterway is unnecessary and redundant Federal bureaucracy.

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There are more than 19 laws in place that directly govern the health of the ocean. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the California Coast Act, the Marine Life Protection Act (which resulted in 29 Marine Protected Areas on the Central Coast), the California Marine Management Act, and The Clean Water Act, among others

➡

There are also already several Federal and State agencies that regulate fisheries. The National Ocean Atmospheric Administration, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, among others.

➡

But what about off shore oil? Federal, state and local county laws already protect against new offshore oil and gas development. Just one example is California's Measure A which prevents future infrastructure for oil storage in California. The National Marine Sanctuaries Act DOES NOT PREVENT OIL DRILLING!! An ACT can be overturned by Congress.

➡

We don't need our local waters to be managed by the designation of the Chumash National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS). Our coast is thriving, healthy and tourists could care less if it's a marine sanctuary. Infact, the CHNMS, may discourage certain tourism such as recreational fishing. People visit and enjoy our beaches today because we are doing the work everyday to preserve and protect our community. There is no need for additional government management of our local waterways.

➡

Keep our coast locally controlled. Keep the Central Coast beaches OURS!

➡

The public comment period deadline is soon - January 31st. Make your voice heard!

➡

Register your concerns through the Federal eRulemaking Portal, [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). The docket number is NOAA-NOS-2021-0080. Click the "Comment Now" Icon, complete required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

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