

Garbage Hike Protest Vote Fails



By Neil Farrell

The protest vote on a garbage rate hike in Morro Bay fell well short of enough votes to stop the latest rate hike, which is due to new regulations coming out of Sacramento and fees out of San Luis Obispo.

The City announced its protest vote on the new rates as required under the State's Prop. 218 — The Right to Vote on Taxes Act — which opened a window for rate-payers to voice opposition to the increases. But it was the garbage company that handled noticing of the public.

If over 50% of the 5,353-garbage company accounts — some 2,677 valid, written protests — had been received, it could not have been enacted.

The Council held a public hearing June 28 to receive any last minute protests with early votes being tabulated after the close of business on the day of the hearing.

City Clerk Dana Swanson said just 34, written protests were received by the end of the public hearing.

"Given there was not a majority protest," Swanson told EBN, "the Council adopted Resolution No. 63-22 approv-

Garbage rates are going up in Morro Bay after a failed protest.

ing the rate increase."

That increase went into effect on July 1, so your next garbage bill should reflect the new rates.

It should be noted that getting garbage service includes one, grey regular garbage can, a green can for green wastes, and a blue one for recycling.

Why Raise Rates?

Part of the reason for this garbage hike was a change in state law that requires people to throw food scraps into the green waste bin and not the gray garbage can so food scraps and other organic garbage can be composted.

Another change comes after the Integrate Waste Management Authority or IWMA, the county-wide agency that covers solid waste disposal issues for the incorporated cities in SLO County, decided to enact a 5.4% "Solid Waste Management Fee" on gross hauler receipts, which also took effect July 1.

The increase comes after the County Supervisors in 2021 voted to sever ties with IWMA and handle garbage service for the unincorporated towns itself.

That decision came after the District Attorney's Office

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State Winding Down Study of Power Plant Pollution



Aerial map of the Morro Bay Power Plant property shows 'Areas of Concern' identified by the Department of Toxic Substances Control and denoted in the shaded areas. The red shaded area is the old tank farm where DTSC did extensive testing of soil and groundwater. It's also where Vistra Energy wants to build a battery storage plant. Map by DTSC

By Neil Farrell

The state agency that regulates and oversees the use and clean ups of toxic substances, has issued its final report on the closed Morro Bay Power Plant, opting to leave whatever pollution was found in place.

The State Department of Toxic Substance Control or DTSC, on June 21 issued its "Final Remedy Selection and Final Statement of Basis" for the Morro Bay Power Plant's continuing decommissioning, after the 1950s-era gas powered plant closed for good in 2014.

Given the changes in ownership of the approximately 110-acre site, which has been sold and resold a couple of times since Duke Energy North America got it from Pacific Gas & Electric in 1998, deciding who is responsible for

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Moving Forward - Peggy and Richard Rothschild: The Story Beyond their Fire Story



Peggy and Richard Rothschild moved to Los Osos after losing their home to a fire.

By Judy Salamacha

Dogs romping on a beach, mysterious humans invading her privacy, and a severed hand uncovered by a K9 with a nose for clues. Author Peggy Rothschild had me at 'dogs romping,' then I turned the page and was hooked. What's not to love about lifeless bodies showing up in an ex-cop's new neighborhood? I read "A Deadly Bone To Pick" in a weekend and can't wait for her sequel, "Playing Dead."

But there was still a mystery unsolved. I needed to

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Pickleball Pickle Continues

Story and Photos by
Theresa-Marie Wilson



Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in America with approximately 4.8 million players. It has two international governing bodies and two national professional tours with a smattering of athletes that are sponsored to the tune of seven figures a year, and it is an Olympic hopeful with paddles aimed at 2024 or 2028.

Readers might wonder what the heck pickleball is. Hint, cucumbers preserved

in vinegar or brine are not a part of the game. It is described as a combination of badminton, ping-pong and tennis that can be played indoors or outdoors on a badminton-sized court with a net similar to a tennis net. It is played with a hard, plastic perforated ball and paddles similar to those used in ping-pong, but bigger and usually made of more advanced materials.

The game is easy to learn and fun for mixed groups, no matter the age, gender, or skill of the players.

Until last month, San Luis Obispo

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Cal Poly Concrete Canoe Team Makes History

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



After a two-year delay due to COVID-19, the Cal Poly concrete canoe team returned to its winning ways at the 2022 American Society of Civil Engineers Concrete Canoe Competition at Louisiana Tech University on June 3-5. The victory marks Cal Poly's sixth championship in the 35-year history of the competition.

Competing with their space-themed canoe Europa against 19 other universities in Ruston, Louisiana, located about 240 miles north of New Orleans, eight Cal Poly engineering students not only swept the races but also finished first in the technical presentation and technical proposal categories of the competition and second in the final product prototype. Université Laval of Canada finished second, Western Kentucky was third, Youngstown State was fourth and

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Fiber Optic Cable Job Causing Delays



Traffic delays on South Bay Boulevard will continue into the fall, as a telecommunications company lays down new underground fiber optic cables.

The installation by private telecommunications company, Zayo Group of Boulder, Colo., and being installed by Leo Tidwell Excavating Corp., began June 20 in the shoulder of South Bay Boulevard, requiring traffic to be controlled with flagmen, as the roadway is narrowed to one lane of alternating traffic.

The traffic delays, by about 5-10 minutes long, is long enough for a string of 30 or more cars to line up behind the stoppage, but otherwise traffic seems to be flowing smoothly, all things considered.

The quick backup of vehicles is an indicator of how busy the only road between Morro Bay and Los Osos is on an average day.

"If partial closures occur," reads a notice from the City of Morro Bay, "for the safety of motorists and workers, flaggers will be in place. Electronic message boards will display updated information during the project. Motorists are advised to adjust their travel plans in consideration of potential delays."

The work will move along South Bay as the cable is laid, and was to progress into the Morro Bay City Limits on July 5. The job is slated to be completed Oct. 2, according to the City notice.

Two Killed in Early Morning Crash

The Highway Patrol is investigating an early morning, fatal, 2-car crash that happened on rural Hwy 1 on the Nipomo Mesa.

According to a news release, at 4:45 a.m. Tuesday, July 6, a 2005 Dodge Ram pickup driven by Cori Lee Hudson, 38 of Grover Beach, was traveling southbound on Hwy 1 in rural Nipomo, approaching the turn onto Winterhaven Way. The report said Hudson's speed at the time of the crash was unknown.

The other car, a 2007 Honda Civic, was driven by 31-year-old Geovany Bazan Rojas of Santa Maria, according to the report, with passenger Julian Hernandez, 35 of Santa Maria, traveling northbound on the 2-lane, Hwy 1, which is commonly called Willow Road through this area of the Mesa.

The CHP listed the speed of this Rojas' car as "unknown" as well.

According to the report, Hudson turned left onto Winterhaven Way and was hit head-on by the oncoming vehicle. The two men in the Civic were killed in the collision and Hudson suffered moderate injuries.

Investigators continue to delve into the crash and did not release a cause nor say who was at fault. The report said weather conditions at the time were "dry/cloudy." No arrests were made in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy but the investigation was ongoing.

City to Study Compensation Rates

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay is seeking proposals to conduct a survey of its pay scale, benefits, and job classifications seeking to stay competitive with similar towns.

On July 8 the City released a notification to "qualified firms with expertise performing classification, compensation and benefits studies for local municipalities," the notice said. "The study will compare the City's total compensation rates across all position types with other similar communities within California's Central Coast, Bay areas, and along the U.S. 101 Interstate corridor."

The work order is extensive, as the City wants the consultant to "determine the necessary number of benchmark classifications (anticipated to be no more than 40), data points (at a minimum, top step salary, employer contributions to health insurance, retirement formulas, and employee contributions), and approximately 10-12 comparison agencies. Paid time off benefits and anticipated cost of living adjustments may be gathered if it can be delivered within the timeline and budget constraints."

Ironically, the City Council just approved new 2-year contracts for most of its employee groups and everyone so far is getting a raise.

On June 14 they approved contracts for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the department heads and middle managers that totaled \$464,000 in salary and benefits costs for Fiscal Year 2022/23 (which started July 1) and \$916,000 for 2023/24 (starting July 1, 2023). All together, the increases top \$1.38 million.

The SEIU employees — the City's biggest employee union — get the most with \$244,700 this year and \$487,000 next year.

Department heads account for \$84,000 this year and \$165,000 for a total of \$249,900. It should be noted that there are only a half dozen or so department heads in the City's employ.

Management — fire captains, police sergeants, maintenance supervisors, etc. — are getting \$113,500 collectively this year and \$220,000 next year.

And confidential employees, the smallest employee type, will get \$21,700 this year and \$42,600 next.

The Police union also got a new contract, with similar bumps. On June 24, the Council approved a 2-year contract with the Morro Bay Peace Officers' Association for an additional \$150,000 in total compensation for this year but the report didn't enumerate the amount for next year.

City Manager Scott Collins' report to Council said, "One outfall from the pandemic is the "great resignation" or "great reshuffling" in the labor market as employees quit their jobs at rates far greater than the pre-COVID-19 period. Whether employees grew overwhelmed with the challenges of working during the global pandemic or sought better working conditions or better pay in different organizations, or changed careers, we are now experiencing a very low unemployment rate nationwide and quit rates remain high. This is creating labor shortages and intense competition for talent in all sectors and volatility, for organizations."

Local governments are apparently having a hard time finding good employees, and keeping the ones they've got.

"The public sector," Collins said, "particularly state and local government, has been hit hard by the labor shortage, and the trend could worsen in the near-term. According to a December 2021 survey by Mission Square Research Institute, more than half of state and local workers said they were considering leaving their positions to retire, change jobs, or leave the workforce entirely. It is becoming harder to hire talent and keep talent in local government."

As for the new compensation study, according to the RFP, the City last did one in 2016 and this new one will be more involved, to include comparing the City's total compensation rates "with other similar communities across all position types will provide the necessary data to begin addressing internal and external equity issues, inform

discussions with employee groups regarding compensation and benefits, and provide key information for the City's long-term financial forecast."

According to the City's time schedule, proposals are due by 5 p.m. July 28 with a contract awarded on Aug. 17. The study is slated to get underway by Sept. 6 and the City anticipates the study will be done by Jan. 6, 2023.

Missing Teen Found in Tijuana, Mexico



An Arizona teenage girl reported missing from Nipomo has been found.

Ailianna Trujillo, 15, who was visiting family members for the summer was reported missing on July 1 after she was seen leaving a family member's home in the early morning hours.

"During the course of the investigation, Sheriff's Detectives were able to determine the identity of a suspect and a female accomplice who had befriended the victim on a social media platform for the past year," said Sheriff's Spokesman, Tony Cipolla in a news release.



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The suspect was identified as 38-year-old Daniel Navarro of Victorville, CA who allegedly posed as a teenager and urged the juvenile to run away with him to Mexico. A female suspect, 20-year-old Julie Le of Garden Grove, CA, allegedly drove Navarro and the victim from Nipomo to a location in Tijuana.

“On July 10, both Navarro and Le were arrested as they entered the United States from Mexico,” Cipolla said. “On the morning of July 11, Mexican authorities rescued the juvenile from a residence in Tijuana, Mexico. She has been safely reunited with her family members.”

Homeland Security Agents who work in the Sheriff’s Special Operations Unit assisted with the case in helping to locate the missing girl. Sheriff’s Detectives also obtained multiple search warrants for cellphone and social media account information that aided the investigation.

The FBI assisted with the coordination of locating and recovering the missing juvenile. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection also assisted with the investigation. The U.S. Department of Justice will prosecute the case in federal court.

Grover Beach Slasher Found Guilty

A Grover Beach man has been found guilty in the knife attack of another fellow in Pismo Beach back in January, and could face a life sentence for the dastardly deed.

According to a news release, Jeremiah Leo Hernandez, 43, was convicted on July 1 of aggravated mayhem and assault with a knife involving a single victim. Both crimes are violent felonies under California’s “Three Strikes Law,” the D.A.’s Office said.

The jury also found that Hernandez “personally inflicted great bodily injury on the victim during the knife assault. Finally, jurors made additional findings that nine factors in aggravation were true.”

Those additional findings could put Hernandez away for life. “The findings include: the attack was violent and indicates a serious danger to society; Hernandez’s prior convictions are numerous and of increasing seriousness; that he has served a prior prison term; and that he was lying in wait when he attacked his victim,” the D.A. said.

During the trial it was revealed that just after 1 a.m. on



Jeremiah Leo Hernandez

Jan. 24, 2022 in the 200 block of Five Cities Dr., in Pismo Beach, Hernandez attacked the victim with a knife, severely slashing his face from the hairline to the lower jaw.

The injury required extensive reconstructive surgery to stitch the man’s face back together again. The D.A. was understandably angered by the vicious attack.

“This vicious and senseless crime,” D.A. Dan Dow said, “will result in the permanent disfigurement of the victim and very well could have ended his life. Individuals committing violent crimes in our community will be met by aggressive prosecution and personal accountability.”

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for July 28 in San Luis Obispo County Superior Court, before Judge Timothy S. Covello. Hernandez faces a potential sentence of life in prison for his crimes.

The Pismo Beach Police Department and the District Attorney’s Office Bureau of Investigation investigated the case. PBPD Detective Sgt. Anthony Hernandez and the D.A.’s Senior Investigator Michael Hoier were the primary investigators. The case was prosecuted by Deputy D.A. Lindsey Bittner.

Molester Convicted; Could Get Life

By Neil Farrell

An accused child molester from Pismo Beach could spend life in prison after being convicted on numerous counts of felony child molestation, the District Attorney’s Office said.

On June 28, District Attorney Dan Dow announced that Todd Anthony Hortillosa, 44 of Pismo Beach was found guilty on 10 counts of “committing lewd acts on three different children under the age of 14. The jury also found that Hortillosa’s crimes involved multiple victims under the age of 14, a finding that provides for a potential life sentence,” the news release said.

During his trial all three victims — now ages 23, 14 and 11 — testified “to the prolonged sexual abuse inflicted by Hortillosa,” the D.A.’s Office said. “The sexual abuse escalated with each victim, but ultimately stopped after it was reported to a teacher by a then 11-year-old victim.”

“Sexual abuse of children,” District Attorney Dan Dow said, “is a horrific betrayal of trust that causes great harm to its victims. We will always do everything within our power



Todd Anthony Hortillosa

to hold child predators accountable to the maximum extent possible.

“We applaud the courage of these young victims to report and testify about what the defendant did to them and we thank the jury for providing justice for these three young survivors.”

Hortillosa’s sentencing hearing is set for Aug. 15, before Judge Craig van Rooyen. He faces a potential sentence of 120-years to life, plus 2-years 8-months in prison for his crimes.

Estero Bay News contacted Assistant D.A. Eric Do-broth seeking more information on the victims in the case but he was tightlipped on the matter, except to confirm that the victims were relatives of Hortillosa’s and calling it “a tragic situation all around.”

San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office and the District Attorney’s Office Bureau of Investigation worked the case and Sheriff’s Detective James Wyatt and District Attorney’s Office Investigator Rosalba Denny the primary investigators. Deputy District Attorney Danielle Baker of the Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Prosecution Unit prosecuted the case.

Convicted Embezzler Ordered to Pay Restitution

A convicted embezzler has been made to pay restitution for millions she embezzled from her employer over a 10-year period, the District Attorney’s Office announced on June 27.

According to a news release, former Arroyo Grande resident Ginger Lee Mankins, 57, pled guilty last September to six counts of felony embezzlement from two victims — Rick Machado Livestock and B&D Farms. The crimes occurred from mid-January 2007 to January 2018.

“Superior Court Judge Jacquelyn Duffy,” the release said, “sentenced Mankins to 10 years in state prison on the plea describing the impact of Mankins’ crime as ‘a tremendous loss and violation of trust.’”

In June, another judge, Denise DeBelleFeuille, ordered that Machado Livestock “be made whole again” and enumerated the theft, calling it a “spectacular betrayal of trust.”



Ginger Mankins

Embezzler Continued on page 4

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Embezzler From page 3

Mankins embezzled \$3.44 million between May 2007 and January 2018 from Machado Livestock “and caused further losses to the business in the amount of \$811,317.”

Mankins and her husband have paid \$2.94M in restitution to Machado Livestock, and the judge order the remainder — \$1.3M also be paid.

As for the other victim, B&D Farms, the D.A.’s Office said that amount was still being tabulated, but she will in all likelihood have to repay that amount too. Those losses will be announced at an Oct. 5 hearing.

“This 10-year prison sentence and order to repay more than \$1,300,000 of stolen funds,” District Attorney Dan Dow said, “affirms that those who steal from our business community will face aggressive prosecution in San Luis Obispo County.

“Embezzlement committed by employees in positions of trust are especially devastating, particularly when it involves staggering amounts of stolen funds over such an extended period of time.”

The case was investigated by the District Attorney’s Office Bureau of Investigations and the Arroyo Grande Police Department and was prosecuted by Deputy D.A. Michael Frye of the D.A.’s Special Prosecution Unit that investigates major fraud and public integrity cases.

Frye just won election to a judgeship in SLO County at the June Primary Election and will be leaving the D.A.’s Office.

County Looks to Sell \$69M in Bonds for Three Projects

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors have approved doing a bond sale to pay for three costly capital improvements projects, and potentially pay for other needed projects in the future.

On June 7, Supervisors were asked to approve setting up a bond financing scheme to pay for a new Probation Department headquarters in San Luis Obispo; a new combined dispatch center for the Sheriff’s Department and Cal Fire/County Fire; and for repairs needed to reopen the Cayucos Vet’s Hall.

According to the item’s staff report by Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector-Public Administrator (ACTTCPA), James Hamilton, the County anticipates those three projects would need \$59.1 million to \$69.5 million in general obligation bonds.

The bond financing scheme is officially called, “The Facilities Financing Plan,” and would be a way for the County to get the projects done without having to wait for outside funding to materialize.

In the report, the new Probation Department HQ is estimated at \$30M to \$35M; the dispatch center at \$25M to \$30M; and the Cayucos Vet’s Hall at \$3.5M.

The Probation Department offices, which are now located in a circe-1940s building on Johnson Avenue in

SLO, was approved in that June 7 meeting to seek bids for a design-build delivery of the project.

With design-build, the same company is chosen to design and build the project, instead of the usual delivery method of “bid-design, bid-construction,” which would seek the lowest bidder in each phase of a project.

With design-build delivery, the theory is that it cuts down on time, and change orders caused by misunderstandings of plans and specs inherent with having two different companies doing the job.

It should be noted that the costs of these projects won’t be known until bids are awarded and even then the final cost won’t really be known until the jobs are completed and all the bills paid.

The County would seek to sell the total amount in lease revenue bonds and draw from that well of cash as each project develops.

If any of the projects is ultimately not approved by Supervisors to move forward, that amount would be reduced from the total. Also, the interest rates on the bonds won’t be set until they are actually sold through the SLO County Financing Authority.

How lease revenue bonds work is that the Financ-

ing Authority sells the bonds and in essence borrows the money to pay for the projects and the County then leases the facilities back, paying both interest and principle over 25 years.

The debt is backed by and repaid out of the County General Fund and Hamilton’s report pegs debt service for \$59.1M-\$69.2M in bonds at \$3.9M-\$4.6M a year, which he said, is within the normal range for public debt, i.e. below 5% of the General Fund Budget.

With the Vet’s Hall project, the County allocated \$571,600 to get the project through the bidding phase including a \$50,000 temporary loan from the “Tax Reduction Reserve Fund.”

The project also received a \$1.9 million grant from Prop. 68, the “Cultural, Community and Natural Resource Grant Program;” and also got a \$300,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy. The community is also raising money to assist, as it did with the rebuilding of the Cayucos Pier.

Supervisors last November approved an interim loan from the Tax Reduction Reserve Fund to get the project rolling, anticipating that this bond sale would repay that loan. The Vet’s Hall was declared structurally unsafe and has been closed for over 5 years.

News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Candidates Needed for Local School Board

With the upcoming November election, Evelyn Frame, San Luis Coastal Unified School District announced she will not run for re-election. Frame represents Trustee Area 2, the Monarch Grove area, (see map blue area www.arcg.is/1P9GW4). Candidates for this seat must live in Area 2.

“While it has been a privilege to serve on behalf of all students, staff, and community members, I will not have the time to effectively serve for another term,” Frame told Estero Bay News. “SLCUSD is fortunate to have amazing teachers, a caring and dedicated staff, and a supportive parent community. Our students deserve our continued efforts to ensure that we provide inspirational learning opportunities, rigor, and support for all. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served on behalf of our community.”

The filing timeline for the November 2022 election runs from July 18-August 12. Papers must be filed with the County Clerk-Recorder’s Office.

For more information about filing for office, contact the Clerk’s office at 805-781-5228 or visit the county website at: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov>.

SLO Parklets to Stay

One of the only good things to come out of the pandemic is here to stay. The outdoor dinning parklets at a variety of restaurants in San Luis Obispo will continue.

The San Luis Obispo City Council made some decisions about a permanent parklet program at its first meeting in July and a new Outdoor Dining Guide outlining it all was created. Restaurants can choose to apply to keep or add a parklet in front of their businesses, with new activation requirements, design standards and a new fee structure that will offset the loss of parking revenue and the additional maintenance cost.

Non-Profit organizations can host community-based parklets as well. Adopting a permanent version of this ordinance means creating design standards and a new fee structure previously waived due to the COVID-19 emergency. The adopted Outdoor Dining Guide that incorporates Council’s changes will be posted on the City’s website soon, so keep your knives and forks at the ready.

Poly Invests in Animal Health

Cal Poly Ventures, a donor-supported fund that invests in Cal Poly-founded and-affiliated startups, announced its investment in the \$12 million Series A round of funding for Mazen Animal Health Inc.

Mazen Animal Health is focused on developing, delivering and commercializing novel biological vaccines and therapeutics. The firm’s orally delivered animal vaccines could revolutionize animal disease prevention.

Mazen’s cross-species platform has flexibility and could be used in swine, poultry, livestock, aquaculture, pets and wildlife — with the potential for vaccine solutions for a wide variety of diseases. It could expand the \$5 billion global vaccine market while dramatically reducing losses. Mazen is focused on swine and companion animals, while expanding its portfolio to all market segments.

The vaccines are produced via recombinant protein production in corn. The technology platform leverages many years of breakthrough research and development led by John Howard, Mazen co-founder and world-leading expert in recombinant protein production in plants. Howard has been a guest lecturer at Cal Poly for nearly two decades and developed the technology on campus in the Cal Poly Tech Park with the support of dozens of faculty members and students.

By creating vaccines to be delivered orally with animal feed, Mazen Animal Health provides solutions to the challenges associated with injectable vaccines. The benefits include: increased production system return on investment — removing the economic thresholds that control today’s vaccination decisions; providing a safer method of vaccine administration for animals and workers; optimizing vaccine efficacy allowing for reduced antibiotic use; and providing vaccines with a global reach because of ambient temperature stability and ease of transport.

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The Probation Department Office project was already approved to go out for bids, after an initial phase last year identified three qualified bidders who submitted information in anticipation of an RFP being issued, which it was in June.

A contract is expected to be awarded in the coming months and the project to start before the end of this year. The new dispatch center would bring the Sheriff's and Cal Fire/County Fire dispatchers under one roof, which is intended to be more efficient and save money.

Currently, Cal Fire/County Fire dispatches all fire and ambulance emergency calls for all of the unincorporated towns, plus several local incorporated cities.

The fire dispatching is done out of the Cal Fire HQ on Hwy 1 in SLO, and the Sheriff's dispatch is located in the County Office of Emergency Services Building on Kansas Avenue.

If that project gets built, both dispatch units would work out of the same new building on Kansas Avenue. Several years ago, that site was turned into a communications hub for the media in the event of natural disasters by the County OES.

The County is also looking at some future projects that could be bond financed as well, including new Health Agency facilities on Johnson Avenue; a new combined office for County Parks and Recreation, the Ag Commissioner and a U.C. Coop office at El Chorro Regional Park; and redevelopment of a former cae dealership on Monterey Street in SLO that has been used by various County Offices for years.

Estimated cost for the Health Agency's new facilities is \$30M; \$25.3M for the Parks & Rec-Ag Commissioner's Offices; and \$60.5M to rehab the old car dealership.

The actual amounts of bonds to be sold for each project would be determined when bids are in and construction contracts awarded, so the numbers here could be a higher or lower than anticipated.

Heroic Police Can't Save Drowning Man

By Neil Farrell

Two Morro Bay police officers are being hailed for quick actions to try and save a man who fell into the bay and drowned.

At about 9:50 p.m. Friday, June 24, police received a 9-1-1 call to check the welfare of a man who had fallen into the bay and was being swept away by the current.

MBPD Cmdr. Amy Watkins said the report was of someone on a kayak who'd paddled out to a boat moored offshore off Estero Inn. The kayak capsized and the man went into the dark, cold and swiftly moving waters.

Ofc. Will Marvos and Ofc. Daniel Palumbo responded to the call.

"They located the subject using a flashlight," Cmdr. Watkins told Estero Bay News. "He was responding to their calls and the officers urged him to swim to shore."

But the man was struggling. So the officers comman-

deered a skiff to go get him and then the engine wouldn't start. So they grabbed paddles and set out after him. By some small miracle they found him but Cmdr. Watkins said he'd lost consciousness and had been face down for some time.

The officers were able to pull the man into the commandeered skiff and Cmdr. Watkins said they started CPR immediately.

Chief Harbor Patrol Officer, Becka Kelly, responded from home to get the patrol boat underway. She said there was a strong, out-going tide and she took three firefighter/paramedics rushing to the scene.

Officers and firefighters transferred the victim to the patrol boat and Kelly said she took them to the Yacht Club dock, and a waiting ambulance.

The victim's pulse had been restored but he was unconscious.

The man, who has not been identified, went to the hospital as a John Doe and died a couple of days later, Cmdr. Watkins said. She was impressed with the actions of her officers.

"It was a large risk to the officers," Cmdr. Watkins said, "because if they fell out of the skiff, with all the gear we wear, they would most likely sink."

And trying to pull a limp body into a skiff isn't something they train for at MBPD. "It is very difficult to pull a body out of the water. We don't practice a lot of water rescues."

One detail sticks out—the victim was not wearing a lifejacket, and Cmdr. Watkins said that had he been, he might not have drowned.

"With any water safety training," She said, "they always have life preservers on. The officers gave this gentleman every opportunity to survive."

So who was he? Ah, therein lies the mystery. None of the emergency people on scene knew who he was but Kelly was sure however, that the man was not a local live aboard.

"He wasn't one of our people," Kelly said. She added that they found a vehicle loaded up with personal belongings as if someone had been living in their car.

If readers knew the man who drowned, his name and history, email the details to: neil@esterobaynews.com and EBN will do a follow up report.

City Looks at Healthy Budget for 2022/23

By Neil Farrell

It might not be much of a "Sharp Dressed Man," as ZZ Top sings, but the City of Morro Bay is goin' crazy, "cause its wallet's fat..."

The City Council recently approved the Fiscal Year 2022/23 City Budgets, and the record setting numbers paint quite a rosy immediate future, one that's insulated pretty well against a "minor recession."

The city administration team — City Manager Scott Collins, Assistant C.M. Sarah Johnson-Rios, and City Clerk

Dana Swanson, all signed onto the first budget together, and delivered a bunch of good news.

Overall, including capital project costs and the new sewer project's continued expenses, the City's budget revenues top \$69.8 million but expenses top \$77.4M. "The difference," reads the report, "comes from available fund balance to be used for one-time capital projects in the Water and Sewer Funds. The City maintains an operating surplus and strong reserve levels."

The General Fund, out of which basic services like police and fire protection are paid, now top \$17.7M and expenditures are \$17.3M, which means the City will bank \$400,000 — or possibly up to \$900,000 — to add to its considerable reserves.

It should be noted that while expenses — chiefly staffing costs — are relatively easy to predict, the revenue projections can be subject to the whims of the economy, and unforeseen natural calamities, like wildfires in the Sierras, which in the past few summers have driven Central Valley dwellers in droves for the clean air on the coast.

A budget is in essence a snapshot of what the City believes its fortunes will be over the next 12 months, and in January, the staff will present a mid-year review, at that time asking for additional appropriations and accounting for any unexpected revenues or grant awards that might come down from the state or federal governments.

In any event, the City's bank account is enviable. "The Revised Proposed Budget," the report said, "projects that the City will have a total of over \$13.5 million in reserves at the conclusion of the budget year, which equates to approximately 38% of the City-wide operating budget in FY 2022-23."

With over seven distinct reserve funds, meant to pay for different needs, the General Fund Reserves top \$8.6M. Add in another \$4.9M in water, sewer, harbor, risk management and IT accounts, and you get the overall picture of the money City Hall has in its varied reserve funds, and a very healthy balance sheet.

According to the summary in the budget document, "This budget allows the City to fully restore service and staffing levels to pre-pandemic levels after having to make painful cuts at the onset of the pandemic.

"In addition, it allows the City to make critical investments in infrastructure improvements by allocating \$18.7 million to 23 capital projects. In addition, this budget invests in current staffing through compensation [labor negotiations are currently ongoing at the time of budget development and placeholders have been included for the cost of compensation increases] and through organizational assessment, teambuilding, training, and classification and compensation analysis. Finally, this budget invests over \$1 million in a pension trust reserve to help reduce the City's unfunded liability over time and to be prepared to better weather potential future CalPERS cost increases.'

With a growing budget, one can expect a growing workforce. Morro Bay, which laid off more than 70 employees at the start of the coronavirus pandemic (Summer 2020), is refilling them. The City budgeted for 98 full time

Budget Continued on page 6



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Busted From page 5

equivalent employees in the FY 2021-22, but at mid-year had 103 FTE. The budget this year raises that to 105.

It also budgets for some 29-part timers, mainly by bringing back the City recreation programs. Rec Services accounts for 16 of these positions, with the fire department getting five positions for reservists, and the harbor department three.

“The FY 2022-23 budget,” the budget summary reads, “adds a net total of 2.1 full-time positions and seven full-time equivalent part-time positions (in terms of the total number of hours budgeted), for a Citywide total of 105.1 full-time positions and part-time staffing that equates to 28.7 fulltime positions, in terms of the number of part-time hours budgeted.”

The staffing changes involve:

- Addition of a Community Services Officer — a non-sworn position in the police department to assist with “significant workload challenges;”
- Addition of a Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer in community development to enforce the vacation rentals ordinance and, “to address increased needs for building inspections and plan checks;
- An Administrative Technician in public works to help support departmental operations, financial administration, and capital project support.

Other changes include:

- Deletion of an Environmental Programs Manager in the public works department — duties to be covered by other positions (Damaris Hanson promoted out of this position to Utilities Manager);
- Addition of part-time staffing in the Recreation Services Division that equates to 4.6 additional full-time positions, continuing to restore services to pre-pandemic levels;
- Addition of part-time staffing in the fire department that equates to two additional full-time positions, to ensure sufficient reserves are available during wildfire season; and,
- Smaller adjustments to part-time staffing levels in other departments that represent “less than one full-time equivalent position Citywide.”

Digging into the budget weeds, the General Fund tax revenue projections list \$5.03M in property taxes; \$2.69M in sales taxes; \$4M in transient occupancy taxes; \$4.51M in “Other Revenues” which would include fees, rents, and other miscellaneous sources; and \$2.1M in “intergovernmental transfers.”

Those are monies taken out of the so-called enterprise funds — mainly water, sewer and harbor funds — to compensate City Hall for services rendered, like payroll, HR, legal, and admin.

Overall, the revenues are projected at \$18.35M.

On the expense side, personnel costs top the list at \$11.76M; with operational costs at \$9.53M; unfunded pension liabilities are at \$2.22M; “other operations and maintenance” costs are at \$4.29M; transfers out are \$2.07M; and debt service is listed at \$1.13M.

“Having strong reserve balances as the City now does,”



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reads the budget, “positions the City well for a potential recession or unanticipated financial impacts.”

The budget forecast lists revenues from Measures Q and E (a half-cent and a one cent local sales tax respectively) predict they will bring in \$4.29M this fiscal year.

Expenditures out come to \$2.66M which means the two local tax measures should be able to continue to add \$1.8M to \$2M a year for infrastructure.

Of perhaps most interest is the condition of the Harbor Fund, which is an enterprise fund entrusted to the City by the State Lands Commission, which actually owns the west side of Embarcadero — both land and water lease sites.

The Harbor Fund predicts \$2.36M in overall revenues, with \$1.85M coming in from harbor lease payments. There’s \$413,000 in “boat charges” (live aboard fees, and docks, piers, moorings, and slip fees for facilities owned by the City); \$73,000 in charges for services; and \$24,000 in “other revenues” like the paid, day use, boat trailer parking at the launch ramp.

On the expense side, personnel costs top \$1.08M; operational costs are \$934,000; pension costs are \$146,000; operations and maintenance is at \$512,000; with transfers out to City Hall at \$324,000, for a total of \$1.91M.

That leaves some \$442,000 surplus in operations. The fund balance when all is said is at \$969,000. “Fund Balance is defined as working capital: current assets less current liabilities.”

In November, voters will be asked to support a \$120 a year tax added onto property tax bills that would raise some \$680,000 a year and specified to be spent maintaining City-owned harbor facilities.

The citizen-driven measure needs a simple majority of votes to be enacted.

Whale Washed up Near Cayucos



By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The carcass of a humpback whale that washed up on shore on July 9 at Montecito Beach south of Cayucos was buried in the sand two days later.

Beach-goers reported the whale appeared to have bite marks on it and pieces of flesh missing, which could be from a killer whale known to go after juvenile humpbacks. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration collected data, but reports were not available before press time.

State Parks and California Fish and Wildlife investigated the dead mammal as well and had to determine what to do with the 15-foot carcass.

There were three options that were considered, said State Parks District Superintendent Dan Falat. “Burying it on the beach, towing it off shore or hauling it off the beach. We determined that that burying the whale on the beach was the best course of action. That was completed yesterday afternoon.”

Falat said the remainder of the whale was buried in an approximately 10-foot deep hole. Photo by Danna Dykstra-Coy

Data Breach Leaks Information on CCW Permit Holders



By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The California Department of Justice has confirmed a data breach of personal information of more than 200,000 Concealed Carry Weapon (CCW) permit holders across the state.

The information was disclosed in connection with the June 27, 2022 update of the DOJ’s Firearms Dashboard Portal.

The DOJ says the incident exposed the personal information of individuals who were granted or denied a concealed and carry weapons permit between 2011-2021. The information disclosed includes full name, date of birth, address, gender, race, CCW license number, California Information Index number (which is automatically generated during a fingerprint check for a CCW or for another purpose), and other government-issued identifiers. In some cases, exposed information may also include driver’s license number, and internal codes corresponding to the statutory reason that a person is prohibited from possessing a firearm. Social Security numbers and financial information were not disclosed as a result of this event.

Additionally, the DOJ is investigating the extent to which any personally identifiable information could have been exposed from the following dashboards: Assault Weapon Registry, Dealer Record of Sale, Firearm Certification System, and Gun Violence Restraining Order dashboards. No personal information was disclosed from the Handguns Certified for Sale file.

This is private information and was not supposed to be visible to the public.

“This unauthorized release of personal information is unacceptable and falls far short of my expectations for this department,” said California Attorney General Rob Bonta in a news release. “I immediately launched an investigation into how this occurred at the California Department of Justice and will take strong corrective measures where necessary. The California Department of Justice is entrusted to protect Californians and their data. We acknowledge the stress this may cause those individuals whose information was exposed. I am deeply disturbed and angered.”

The DO immediately shut down the portal upon notification of the breach, However, some CCW holders may have already had their personal information compromised.

The DOJ will notify those individuals whose data was exposed and provide additional information and resources. California law requires a business or state agency to notify any California resident whose unencrypted personal information, as defined, was acquired, or reasonably believed to have been acquired, by an unauthorized person.

In an abundance of caution, the DOJ says it will provide credit monitoring services for individuals whose data was exposed as a result of this incident. against the possibility of someone opening new credit accounts in your name.

The Morro Bay Police Department has been informed of the data breach and urges anyone with questions to contact the Department of Justice at (916) 210-6276 or call their toll-free number (800) 952-5225.

Readers that think their personal information may have been obtained through this breach, can file a report online with the Department of Justice, or contact MBPD at (805) 772-6225.

Community

Big Switcheroo with Latest Free Car Giveaway



From left, Bill Todd, Kathleen Tyndal and Mike Todd celebrate Tyndal's being the 37th recipient in the Lions Club's quarterly car giveaway, a 2000 Toyota Camry.

By Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay Lions Club gave away its 37th free car on June 18, pulling the ol' switcheroo on their unsuspecting but delighted recipient.

Bill Todd of Todd's Garage and a Lions' board member, said he was a bit embarrassed at their original car to give away — a 1993 Toyota Corolla Station Wagon, which has a bit of body damage on the passenger side and needs a water pump.

But the recent death of a local fellow, Robert Hyde, presented an opportunity to upgrade their gift.

The Hyde Family donated his 2000 Toyota Camry LE, a white, 4-door sedan. "It was perfect timing," said Todd.

With the City's Water Recycling Facility (WRF) trenching contractor again

tearing up Quintana Road in front of the garage — on a Saturday — gift car recipient, Kathleen "Katie" Tyndal was nonetheless very grateful for any car.

Katie, who works at Todd's Garage while also doing an externship to become a medical assistant, said she was living in the Central Valley and had just gotten a Honda Civic. "I had it 2 days," she said, "before someone stole the whole exhaust; they were after the catalytic converter."

Replacing it was problematic. "It made the difference," she said, "between affording and not affording a car. I sold it for next to nothing."

She's since moved to the coast and has been carless, borrowing a Prius owned by Bill Todd to ease the burden she was having on a couple of friends that were graciously giving her rides everywhere. But that too

had a rather unhappy ending.

Two weeks ago, Tyndal explained, she was coming home at night from Los Osos on South Bay Boulevard when she hit a deer and wrecked Todd's Prius. She was unhurt physically by the deer strike, but emotionally, she was a wreck.

"I'd never hit a large animal before," she explained. "It was very upsetting. I have this horrible image in my mind of the deer being launched by the collision. It was very sad." She added that the poor deer died instantly; the Prius survived, barely.

"What was even worse," she said, "was I had to tell Bill."

She said she drove it home and was again without wheels. The Lions Club had already awarded her a car and was planning to give it to her, along with another vehicle, at the recent Morro Bay Car Show. Walter Ramage did receive that other vehicle.

But Tyndal was unable to attend so they postponed her giveaway. That's when the swap for the old station wagon happened.

On the 18th, with the station wagon sitting in the driveway, Mike Todd, Bill's son and cohort in the garage, drove the Camry around the block and into the garage's front drive, where Tyndal was let in on the switcheroo.

"I'd be so happy either way," she said as she sat in the front seat of her car for the first time.

The Lions Car Giveaway is done in conjunction with the Morro Bay Community Resource Connections, a non-profit group operating out of the Chamber of Commerce office at 695 Harbor St.

The Resource Connections does the intake of applications for the program and a committee judges them on their merits, with extra points going for things like someone who regularly volunteers in the community.

But otherwise, one simply has to have a real need for transportation. The Lions give away a car every 3 months.

The cars come to them in a variety of ways — some are donated after the death of a loved one, when someone gets too old



Bill Todd is all smiles as he hands over the keys to a 2000 Toyota Camry that the Lions Club gifted Kathleen Tyndal as part of its free car giveaway program. Tyndal was the 37th person so far to be gifted a car.

to drive, or instead of trading it in. The Lions Club gives full Blue Book value to the donors for tax purposes.

The Todds — Bill and Mike — go through the vehicles, fixing whatever is wrong with them and making sure they pass smog check (Todd's Garage is a smog check station). They sometimes also have the cars detailed by local detail shop, Silva's.

A recipient has to have the means to keep the registration up and to get insurance too.

The Lions accept cash donations for the program, which they use to buy parts, tires, and even whole cars, if they come across a good one for sale.

See: www.communityresourceconnections.net/home/car-give-aways for information on the program.

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Police Blotter



• **July 3:** Police responded at 10:17 p.m. to a disturbance in the 200 block of Beach. A 37-year-old raucous fellow was arrested for suspicion of being drunk in public and the jackanapes was jailed.

• **July 2:** Police contacted a suspicious man and woman at 3:42 p.m. in the 400 block of Quintana. According to logs the man, 53, was arrested for suspicion of possessing drugs for sale, possession of drugs, and drug paraphernalia. His female companion, 48, was nabbed for suspicion of possessing illegal drugs but only got cited and released. Ironically, just the day before, this same belle of the ball was allegedly caught with drugs and paraphernalia in an incident in the 300 block of Quintana, for which she got cited and released, ‘cause as they say, “The road goes on forever and the party never ends...”

• **July 2:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 7:30 a.m. in the 1700 block of Embarcadero. The 49-year-old apparent masochist had a bench warrant and was issued another ticket that he’ll no doubt violate too.

• **July 1:** Police responded at 7:30 p.m. to a hit-n-split report in the 2400 block of Nutmeg. Logs indicate the homeowner reported some van backed into his chain link fence damaging it and then the sinister zhlub drove away.

• **July 1:** Yet another bail jumper was cited and released, this time in the 700 block of Quintana at 11:12 a.m.

• **June 30:** Police responded lights and sirens to The Siren in the 900 block of Main at 11:40 p.m. Logs indicated a 31-year-old ruffian was nicked for suspicion of creating a

disorderly kerfuffle.

• **June 30:** Police received a report from a 72-year-old woman in the 1100 block of Front St., that she’d gotten a text message involving a financial scam, as the Russians are at it again.

• **June 30:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 11:30 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. Logs indicated he had six bench warrants, which apparently triggered some conditioned response, as he was hauled to the hoosegow.

• **June 30:** Someone in the 2600 block of Coral reported being involuntarily relieved of some undisclosed treasures.

• **June 30:** A citizen in the 100 block of Island reported a case of mail theft and forgery, a case of hooligans run amok.

• **June 30:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 12:12 a.m. at Main and Quintana. Logs indicated the 28-year-old rapscaillon had three drug-related warrants and was arrested. During a search, officers allegedly found suspected drugs and paraphernalia on her person. And despite all that, she was cited and released, no doubt under the new catch-and-release job security program.

• **June 29:** Police responded to Del Mar Elementary School in the 500 block of Sequoia where a kid said some apparent bully threatened him with a knife and demanded he turn over his scooter, as a life of hooliganism apparently starts early with some people.

• **June 29:** At 3:18 p.m. an apparently guilt-ridden fellow, 57, turned himself in for a warrant.

• **June 29:** Some citizen turned in some firearms for police to destroy.

• **June 29:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:51 a.m. at Main and Shasta. Logs indicated the driver, 44, committed the unholy Trinity — a suspended license, expired registration and no insurance, and will now receive California’s true death penalty — going to the DMV.

• **June 29:** At 12:02 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana someone found a bicycle and police rode away with it.

• **June 29:** At 11:43 p.m., police arrested yet another dingus with warrants, aged 22, in the 700 block of Quintana.

• **June 28:** At 8:15 p.m. police responded to a disturbance at Coleman Drive and the Embarcadero. A 27-year-old bouncer was nicked for being buttered in public.

• **June 27:** Police responded at 11:30 p.m. to a reported domestic dustup in the 2600 block of Main. Logs indicated a 35-year-old louse was arrested for alleged abuse of his spouse and was hauled to the big house.

• **June 27:** Police responded at 9 p.m. to the 1700 block of Embarcadero where a woman was apparently having a sloshed moment. Police locked up a 36-year-old tomato for being stewed.

• **June 27:** Police responded at 7:34 p.m. to the 900 block of Main where some apparently drunk, crankypated fellow, 62, kicked paramedics who were apparently there to help his ungrateful a**.

• **June 26:** Police were called at 11:51 p.m. to Marina Square in the 600 block of Embarcadero to chase off a trio of wharf rats that were apparently squatting for the night. Police arrested a woman, 38, and two gents aged 64 and 51 for suspicion of trespassing and being crunked in public.

• **June 26:** Police responded at 7:48 p.m. to a disturbance in City Park on Harbor Street. Logs indicated a familiar hombre, 37, got tossed into the slammer for being soused and having at least one bench warrant issued for, well, being soused. He slept it off at the Parkinson Plaza.

• **June 26:** Police responded at 3:45 p.m. to an assault report in the 300 block of Dunbar St. Logs indicated they made an arrest, but didn’t cough up the charges, nor the nodcock’s name.

• **June 26:** Police at 11:40 a.m. responded to a general emergency call in the 700 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated a City street tree dropped a limb and struck a parked car. They documented the dastardly act but apparently won’t arrest the tree.

• **June 26:** Police responded at 1:30 a.m. to a disorderly conduct report in the 500 block of Marina. Logs indicated they found a 25-year-old annoying flesh monkey allegedly trespassing on the caller’s roof and balcony. He was nicked for suspicion of trespassing and being out of his tree, which

explains a lot.

• **June 26:** Police responded at 12:45 a.m. to an assault reported in the 800 block of Market. Logs indicated this time a 46-year-old louse was arrested for abuse of his spouse and got tossed into the big house.

• **June 25:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:34 p.m. in the 1500 block of Main for some no doubt trumped up code violation. Logs indicated the 22-year-old driver was cited for a suspended license, and sentenced to suffer the slings and arrows of the DMV.

• **June 25:** Police responded at 4:17 p.m. to The Morro Bay Fish Company in the 1200 block of Embarcadero where some scaly scalawags stole fish, a hanging offense in this town.

• **June 25:** Police responded at 2:10 p.m. to a report of someone having a bit of a meltdown in the 1600 block of Preston Ln. Logs indicated the subject’s behavior with officers on scene led to a citation for allegedly making criminal threats and “detering an officer” by threatening violence against him, too. The non compos mentis fellow was taken to Sierra Vista Hospital, where he was cited and turned over to “a constant observer” until County Mental Health arrived.

• **June 24:** Police stopped a suspicious car at 9:20 p.m. on Hwy 1 at Atascadero road. Logs indicated the scofflaw, 28, had a suspended license and was cited and released to mercies of the merciless DMV.

• **June 24:** Police responded at 4 p.m. to the 700 block of Embarcadero to referee an uncivil dispute “between co-owners of a business.” A courtesy report was taken for the lawsuit sure to follow.

• **June 23:** Police contacted a familiar fellow at 5:14 p.m. in the 1000 block of Front St. Logs indicated the scofflaw, 40, had multiple “failure to appear warrants” and was of course issued another disappearance ticket and unleashed back amongst the law-abiding peasantry.

• **June 22:** Someone surrendered something lost somewhere sometime by some unknown somebody.

• **June 23:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 8:31 a.m. who’d apparently crawled out from the creek in the 300 block of Quintana. The apparent squirt, 36, had only one bench warrant and so was given a second and released, no doubt having six or 10 to go to actually get arrested.

• **June 23:** Police responded at 6:10 a.m. to a reported robbery at the Mobile Gas Station at 911 Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated police arrested a 22-year-old woman for suspicion of robbery and assault. Ol’ Bonnie Parker was tossed into the dungeon.

• **June 22:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 10:18 p.m. at Radcliff and Main. Logs indicated the 35-year-old swamp donkey had a warrant, which didn’t warrant arrest but warranted issuance of a future warrant.

• **June 22:** At 4:19 p.m. police responded to Main and Sequoia for a suspicious parked car. They towed off the nefarious vehicle for an expired registration, making the world once again safe for democracy.

• **June 21:** Police contacted yet another scofflaw with warrants, at 4:50 p.m. in the 300 block of Quintana. The 49-year-old feculent fellow had two warrants and was given another one to ignore.

• **June 21:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 7:20 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. The 37-year-old chap was nicked for allegedly being higher than the stacks on drugs, an apparent case where the early worm got the bird.

• **June 21:** Police responded at 2:23 a.m. for a disturbance in the 200 block of MBB. Logs indicated a 19-year-old mulish fellow allegedly violated a stay-the-hell-away-from-her order and got checked into the iron bar hotel.

• **June 20:** Police responded to an unresponsive person report at 3:35 p.m. at an apartment in the 200 block of Dunes.

• **June 20:** The red light hooligan roundup continued with the apprehension of one scofflaw with a warrant in the 300 block of Quintana at 11:54 a.m. He was cited and released. And a second model citizen with a warrant was cited at 1 p.m. at Main and Errol.

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Community

Events From page 9

and we will read aloud together.
Coffee Can Ice Cream – Saturday, July 9, 12 – 1 p.m.
Rock and roll coffee canisters to make your very own ice cream! Presented by the Master Food Preservers. School Age.
Lego CLub – Friday, July 15, 3 - 5 p.m.
Come play with Legos. Build your own creations and have lots of fun. School Age.



Instrument Petting Zoo – Saturday, July 16, 2 - 4 p.m.
The Instrument Petting Zoo brings kids (and grown-ups) an up-close and personal encounter with a menagerie of musical instruments at community events throughout San Luis Obispo County. Symphony Zookeepers will introduce you to all of the well-loved and well-used instruments in our collection, and help you figure out how to make some noise! Learn more about the different types of instruments, how each one creates a unique sound, and how they are played.



Enjoy A Conversational Retrospective of Festival Mozaic at the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on July 27. Cal Poly professor and local musicologist Dr. Craig Russell will lead this interactive lecture event featuring a conversation with Mozart Festival founder Clifton Swanson.
In addition to his teaching career, Dr. Craig Russell is a co-host of KCBX in Concert which airs Wednesdays on KCBX Central Coast Radio. He was a staff musicologist for the Mozart Festival for over a decade leading lecture series and a series of concerts for young people called “Ear Opener Concerts.”
The founding music director of the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival (now Festival Mozaic), Clifton Swanson has played a major role in the San Luis Obispo music scene. He joined the Cal Poly music department faculty in 1967 where he originally taught music appreciation and music history. He soon assumed responsibility for Cal Poly’s Symphony Orchestra and founded and conducted the Cal Poly Chamber Orchestra. He was also the music director and conductor of the San Luis Obispo Symphony from 1971 to 1984. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at festivalmozaic.org.

The Brian Waterbury Rock to Pier Fun Run takes place July 16. The event kicks off at 8 a.m. when racers will run on the beach from Morro Rock to the Cayucos Pier. This half marathon is open to all ages and abilities and ages. You can even sign up to run remotely!
To register, go to morro-bay.ca.us/308/Community-Events-Tournaments.

The Cambria Center for the Arts Gallery holds its 2022 Juried Show of Fine Arts & Craft through August 28.



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The juror for this show is Franceska Alexander, M.F.A. Alexander has been involved in the art world since early childhood when her artist father began giving her art supplies and encouraging her to express her creativity. She studied art in Northern California at College of San Mateo, Monterey Peninsula College and Sierra College before continuing with private painters in Big Sur, Nevada City, Bay Area, Sacramento, Ireland, Cape Cod, and Venice.
In addition to painting and operating galleries, Franceska has been an art coach to many, from aspiring young artists to accomplished professionals. She is the author of “Gallery Ready, A Creative Blueprint for Visual Artists”.
To see the exhibit on-line: <https://cambriaarts.org/gallery-exhibits/>
Contact the Gallery with any questions at gallery@cambriaarts.org.



Don't miss Heartless - A Tribute To Heart at the Siren in Morro Bay on July 23 from 8 to 10:30 p.m. Heartless a Tribute to Heart is California's premier Heart Tribute Band, inspired by more than 30 years of Rock & Roll magic from sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson. At every performance, Heartless a Tribute to Heart takes you on a musical journey from the 1970s to today! Tickets range from \$15 to \$17 and can be purchased at eventbrite.com.

Bring the gang to the Family Concert Carnival of Animals on July 25 at Cuesta's Harold J Miossi Cultural and Performing Arts Center from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Join Scott Yoo, the Festival Mozaic Orchestra, and the Movement Arts Collective for a family-friendly performance of Carnival of the Animals with live dance and narration by San Luis Obispo's Hometown Radio host Dave Congalton. This program will last under one hour without an intermission. Come early for an instrument petting zoo in front of the CPAC starting at 10 a.m. presented by the San Luis Obispo Symphony. Tickets are \$5 per person and can be purchased at festivalmozaic.org.

Do you want to take the first step in conquering the fear of public speaking? Do you want to learn and practice thinking and speaking quickly and clearly on your feet? Are you interested in building strong communication and leadership abilities as well as honing your active listening skills? Come and see what happens at toastmasters' meetings and how being a member can help you become more confident in public speaking and presentation and grow as a leader.

Email tm.slomotion@pm.me to receive the Zoom link or in-person meeting information. The next online meeting is Monday, July 25 from 12 to 1 p.m.

Join the Grover Beach Community Library for their Meet the Author series starting July 19. Our first author is Pismo Beach singer/songwriter Raymond H. McDonald. Raymond wrote “Merle Haggard was a Friend of Mine” as a tribute to his lifelong friend, Merle Haggard. This memoir chronicles the life of a humble man from humble beginnings in California.
Join Raymond and his guitar at the library, 240 N 9th St. in Grover Beach from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Social time is 6:30 to 7 followed by an author reading and Q&A from 7 to 8 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to nans-books@aol.com.



Checkout Emily Wells at SLO Brew at SLO Brew Rock at 9 p.m. on Thu, July 21. Forging a bridge between pop and chamber music, composer, producer, and video artist Emily Wells builds songs from deliberate strata of vocals, synths, drums, piano, string and wind instruments. Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the door. They can be purchased at festivalmozaic.org.


Brent's Deli Day, presented by the Jewish Community Center Federation of SLO, is back for the summer! Order your deli favorites from Brent's Deli in Westlake Village! The JCC will pick-up the food for you while you stay in the comfort of your home.
For more information and a list of deli items, go to jccslo.com/brents-deli-day.
All items will be available for pickup at Temple Ner Shalom, 875 Laureate Lane in San Luis Obispo on Tuesday, July 26 from 2:30 to 4 p.m.
Tipping is optional when you pick up your food.
Folks paying by check, should let them know so that they can put your order on the list before the check arrives at the JCC Office at 10180 Los Osos Valley Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405.
Order your food by Wednesday, July 20.

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Community



Grover Beach Community Library welcomes the Central Coast Aquarium’s Tidepools on Tour on July 23 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. The public is invited to this free activity featuring mobile aquarium tanks with live creatures including crabs, sea stars, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, sea anemones, sea snails, mussels, scallops, algae and more. Tidepools on Tour follows our Kids Summer Reading Program Awards Ceremony from 1 to 1:30 p.m. inside the library. Join us at 240 N 9th St. in Grover Beach in the library parking lot. Space is limited, so please call 805-481-4131 to RSVP. Send your event listing at least three weeks in advance to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com. Make sure to include the who, what, why, where and when of the event and contact information. Please, type out in paragraph form rather than attaching flyers.



By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Grant Opportunity for Non-Profits in SLO

Readers who operate a non-profit in the City of San Luis Obispo have an opportunity to earn a portion of

\$300,000 in grant monies. Nonprofit organizations that provide local projects, programs, or initiatives that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the City of San Luis Obispo can now apply for a new grant opportunity. The City of San Luis Obispo is offering a total of \$300,000 in funding through its HIGH-IMPACT DE&I grant program for FY 2022-23. Applications are due on August 31, 2022 by 5 p.m. Late submissions will not be considered. The City plans to award the funds in early 2023. This funding is focused on narrowing equity gaps that have disproportionately impacted marginalized communities. These gaps include, are not limited to:

- Physical and mental health services
- Education
- Housing
- Criminalization
- Food security
- Community representation

The grants are administered through the SLO’s newly created Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, City staff will host an information session online via Zoom on Wednesday, July 27 at 5:30 p.m. For details and eligibility requirements, visit www.slocity.org/dei. Questions can be sent to the City’s Diversity Equity and Inclusion Manager Beya Makekau at bmakekau@slocity.org.

Medical Doctor Starts Estate Planning Law Practice



A medical doctor turned lawyer is now available to help with the financial end of succession strategies. Klaus Gottlieb, MD, wasn’t happy with what he experienced when family and friends were trying to get their succession plans in order. Trust and Estate attorneys seemed to be too busy to answer their emails in a timely manner and were not returning phone calls.

This frustration, coupled with a conviction that he could do better, and a lifelong interest in the intersection of finance and law (he also has an MBA), convinced Dr. Gottlieb to go back to law school. “I am not sure my last name is memorable, so I call my practice Wealth Care Lawyer,” Dr. Gottlieb said. “It’s a play on Health Care Lawyer and comes with a website of the same name. “Wealth Care is also the program, meaning, a holistic approach to passing on your wealth and values to the next generation. That means, we may need to involve your existing planners, CPA, financial adviser, etc.” The practice opened its doors in May in Cayucos, but Dr. Gottlieb welcomes clients from the entire Central Coast. “A lot can be done virtually, and for the rest, I visit clients all along the coast and in Kern County. I love driving. Besides, I do a lot of CLE [continuing legal education that way].” Wealth Care Lawyer – Dr. K. Gottlieb is online at www.wealthcarelawyer.com. He can be reached at 805-286-0258.

SLO Rep Ribbon Cutting



San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre (SLO REP) recently held a ribbon cutting courtesy of SLO Chamber of Commerce, and launched an ambitious schedule of Academy of Creative Theatre (ACT) summer theatre camps in their new headquarters at 3533 Empleo Street in San Luis Obispo. The 10,000 square foot space, purchased by SLO REP in March, is the first permanent ‘home’ for the 76-year-old organization, which has been continually producing shows since 1947. “This building represents something that SLO REP has never had in our 75-year history in this community: a home,” said Kevin Harris, SLO REP’s Managing Artistic Director. “For the first time in nearly eight decades, this organization will be able to house all of our administrative and production staff, educational programs, outreach, rehearsal rooms, storage, and scenic and costume workshops under one roof. For the very first time, since 1947, we will have a home base to continue to grow this theatre over the next several decades.” The Empleo Street Headquarters is the first site in SLO REP’s “two-site plan” as part of their ongoing Capital Campaign. The second site — a new theatre building with two performance spaces — is slated to open in early 2027 on the corner of Monterey and Nipomo Streets in downtown SLO’s Arts and Culture District. SLO REP will still produce plays and house administrative offices at its current venue at 888 Morro Street until completion of the new downtown theatres. For more information about ACT Summer Theatre Camps, go to slorep.org/education/act-theatre-camps/ or call (805) 781-3889, ext. 14. For more information about Empleo Street or SLO REP’s upcoming 76th Season of performances at 888 Morro Street in downtown SLO, contact Chris McBride at (805) 781-3889, ext. 15 or email chris@slorep.org.

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.

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Community

Morro Bay White Caps
Upcoming Show



The White Caps Community Band is growing and playing more shows. Last month, under the direction of their new conductor Brenda Hascall, the musicians performed popular tunes including “The Avengers” and “The Pink Panther” as well as jazz classics like “Aint Misbehavin,” “Georgia on My Mind” and “Take the A Train.”

“The band has added several new members increasing not just their size but their sound,” Hascall said.

Be sure to catch their next performance on Saturday, July 23 at the T-Pier on the Embarcadero from 10:30 a.m. to Noon.

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

Each issue, this column will feature one of the Bookshelf Writers:
Debbie Black, Catherine “Kiki” Kornreich, Judy Salamocha and Susan Vasquez

Walking Kherson,
Ukraine

By Susan Vasquez

When I hear news about Ukraine, I don’t think of global politics. I think about a man who sold me honey at Kherson’s outdoor market. I think of my former co-workers. I think of the bread lady at the kiosk down the street who would only sell us the very best of what she had to offer. Kherson, Ukraine was my home for nearly a year, and today I would like to take you on a walk down its main street as a tribute to a precious way of life.



Ushakova Boulevard in Kherson, Ukraine runs straight from the railway station to the Dneiper River quay. Along its sides, many of Kherson’s important buildings have stood for decades. The street is lined with broad pathways and sidewalks, covered by enormous green leaves from chestnut trees in the summer, made dangerous by ice and snow in the winter. If you walk one street in Kherson, it should be Ushakova, and it should be in early summer.

Like many post-Soviet railway stations this one impresses you with complex walkways leading from the arriving trains. There are overhead walkways, round and about walkways and zig zags. Follow the other passengers, and you will eventually find yourself in the building’s reception area, filled with high ceilings, wooden walls and Cyrillic-lettered notices. Head out the station’s entrance, and you have found the city’s Grand Avenue - Ushakova.

Near the station, the buildings that line the street are Lenin-era buildings, gentler than the newer concrete-block buildings. The Stalin-era buildings, the concrete ones, were built unemotionally, to last. The Lenin-era buildings were built with love, wood, and high ceilings. Many are beginning to slowly crumble, waiting for someone to decide their future.

Soon, you pass by one of those newer concrete buildings, and notice that even it is beginning a slow crumble of neglect. Other buildings on your walk, the Music College for example, are sturdy, well-tended and vibrant.

There is an extravagant Naval College and a long, industrial-looking post office. From your sidewalk, you peek through an open lot and see a beautiful little Orthodox church. Tall feathered stems from grasses wave between you and the church, surrounded as it is with a graveyard that grows field grasses high during a quick and vigorous spring.

Ushakova here becomes a true boulevard. Benches for

sitting divide two wide walkways that line each side of the street. The traffic lanes of the street are narrow compared to these pedestrian walkways. More buses than private vehicles fill the avenue. But there are many, many people, like you, walking. To keep up with your Ukrainian sidewalk companions, you’ll have to quicken your pace. If you want to sit and watch for a while, pick a bench and rest.

But don’t stop long, for farther down the boulevard is Lenin Square. When I was taking this walk, in 2010, a huge statue of Lenin stood in the middle of the expanse of concrete. It is no longer there, having been pulled down during the Maidan protests of 2011-2012. Even empty, the size of this rectangle of concrete will impress you. Massive public areas, like this one, are here and there around Kherson. Once a city of 500,000, now retreating to near 200,000, this amount of common space feels overwhelming.

All along Ushakova, you have passed restaurants, many with cafe tables along the sidewalk. Now, as you reach the pedestrian street of Suvarova, you see there are many more, as well as shops and perhaps some sidewalk artists and vendors.

The avenue here begins a steep descent to the Dneiper River. There is a beautiful wharf walk along the river that runs through a park that is allowed to grow wild with spring grasses, then - just in time - trimmed with weed whackers in a fit of tidiness.

Something invades your peaceful river thoughts, the Hotel Fregat. A futuristic design sixty years ago, the building and grounds now look like a sad mockery of the 1960s. It hasn’t fallen into disrepair, just fallen wildly out of fashion. Maybe a little disrepair, too.

But the river is glorious. Ushakova ends here, at the wide, powerful, decisive Dneiper. Large and small outboard motor boats can take you back and forth to the islands just across the current. Yachts sail by, but not often. Enormous commercial ships ferry goods occasionally. Most of the time, you can stand here at the quay with just you, your thoughts, and the steel-colored waves.

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, and is a member of the Bookshelf Writers, four Estero Bay women whose writing can be found at <http://www.thebookshelfwriters.com>

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Tap to Toilet

Item C-2 for Tuesday’s regular Morro Bay City Council [June 28] meeting is regarding the AWSDA(Annual Water Supply and Demand Assessment) report that the Planning Commission just saw this week. On page 448 of the staff report it says, “Injected SWP Water - With the anticipated construction of the WRF indirect potable reuse test injection well in July 2022, the City will have the ability to inject water into the Morro Basin to increase the amount of groundwater in storage that it can rely upon during the SWP Shutdown. The City anticipates injecting water starting in August/September 2022 and slowly building up a supplemental supply of water up until November 2022. The City can then utilize the additional groundwater placed into storage in Morro Basin until the SWP is back online in December 2022”. This is illustrated in the graph on page 450 as the orange column.

My comments:

The City starts showing this injected state water in the month of August but that is only when they begin injection but admittedly won’t be extracted until November when the state water is down for maintenance as it does each year. Therefore, it cannot be considered as supply or available until November when they show it is actually needed. What they don’t say is that since it is being put into the contaminated ground in the lower Morro Valley, it will need to be processed in the city’s reverse osmosis treatment plant before being put into the city’s water system. Why on Earth would anyone in their right mind put that perfectly good, already treated drinking water into a contaminated groundwater basin and mix it with that crappy water that needs to be treated once again? There must be a better place to inject this water.

The graph on page 451 which shows the reclaimed IPR (Indirect Potable Reuse) water only used in years 9, 15 & 16. We have been repeatedly told that the reclaimed water will provide 80% of the town’s supply. Have City leaders not been honest with the EPA and the SRF folks in order to get their financial assistance? Those loans are predicated on utilizing recycled water most all of the time from here to eternity. The EPA press release indicated 100%. Does this mean that the shiny new WRF dairy farm on the hill is really no more than a very expensive glorified wastewater treatment plant that will discharge the treated toilet water into the ocean once again?

Do you really understand “Toilet to Tap?”

The City of Morro Bay by the operation of their new WRF facility will be able to produce large quantities of highly purified, reverse osmosis derived water. The question is what to do with this very expensive, non-potable water. The City’s promise to the citizens is that they will provide it to them during water shortages to reduce their dependence on State water. That is easier said than done.

The phrase “toilet to tap” is generally used in a disparaging way to describe purified water from a sewage treatment facility intended for human consumption. The science on this subject is quite extensive and has resulted in laws and regulations to protect humans from poor practices. Reverse osmosis (RO) is currently the best way to achieve a high level of water purity from sewage, however this process has not been able to meet the standards needed for long term human use. This is because such purified water does have small amounts of viruses and organic chemicals in it (the organic chemicals of particular interest are drugs, both ethical and illegal, and biological derivatives that are bioactive). Granted, the levels of impurities are small, but the number of them can be quite large, particularly from sewage sources. The long-term consumption of such low levels of biologically active materials is unknown, but



regulations on exposing large segments of the public to them is universally prohibited.

The question then is how to remove these potentially hazardous materials from the RO water. This requires a different methodology from RO and oxidative treatment by either chlorination and/or ozonation. Currently the only approved way forward is to allow natural bacteria found in contained, percolating aquifers or large reservoirs to metabolize (eat) them. This generally requires a three-month residence time in such bodies of water before recovery of the RO water.

The City of Morro Bay is proposing to inject their RO water from the treatment of local raw sewage into an underground river in the Lower Morro Valley for a projected two-month residence time and then recover it through the wells in Lila-Kaiser Park. This has several key issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, no-one has ever used a subterranean stream, which is a non-percolating aquifer. This lack of precedence is disturbing and relies on the citizens of Morro Bay to be guinea pigs in this experiment. Secondly, the shorter than three-month residence time in the riverbed is certainly pushing any data that can be used as a clear comparison to the longer residence time data.

There is another major concern in the proposed purification of the WRF’s RO water and that relates to the wells they are going to be using to recover the water. These wells have been proven to be contaminated with raw sewage from the underground North Morro Bay sewage Collection system. This City testified to the Regional Water Control Board in 2014 that they did not need the water from these wells, so no restrictions were attached to the “useless” wells. In the interim, the City has not replaced the leaking sewer lines so there is no expectation the wells have miraculously rejected the underground sewage flow. This is disturbing, for two reasons. First, the City does use the contaminated water every year when the state water supply is interrupted for cleaning. Second, the supposedly cleaned up WRF RO water will be re-contaminated by using those wells during the recovery of the RO water. This will require another RO treatment and aquifer purification before being fit for human consumption. They would need a different aquifer to avoid contamination during recovery which is not possible if they are using contaminated wells. In fact, the contaminated soil may require for require decades to be decontaminated by natural means.

The bottom line is that there are tried and true ways to upgrade water from sewage treatment facilities to make it fit for human consumption. The methods being proposed by the City of Morro Bay are likely to fail to afford the citizens of Morro Bay with safe, potable water. Since RO water is way too expensive for agriculture, it needs to be used wisely or not made at all. The City will soon have an RO water facility that may only be useful for deterring salt-water intrusion into Morro Bay at considerable expense. It would be advisable to find a better way to use this expensive commodity if we are going to produce it.

Carole Truesdale
Morro Bay

Editors note: To see the agenda and report, go to morrobayca.gov/ArchiveCenter/View-File/Item/5952

Letters to the Editor



Why Are Low-Income Houses Expensive?

I read with interest and article on a proposed low-income housing project in your area. The proposed is a bond, loan for \$30 million to construct 68 units. That is over \$440,000 per unit, if it comes in at budget. Why do low-income housing projects cost so much?

Harvey Armas
Fresno

Water Problems in Morro Bay

Morro Bay gets water from wells in Morro Creek as a backup to our State Water allotment, which is the primary source of drinkable water. The City’s share of State Water varies according to snowfall, so one of the City’s selling points for the WRF was that the town would be able to get 80% of its water from the WRF (sewer plant).

Currently, the City has permission from the State to extract 581 Acre Feet per Year (AFY) from the Morro Basin. Reports show that 25% of that amount is lost in recovery/cleaning, so the maximum the City can realize is 436AFY. Under current water needs (1100AFY) that is only 40% of what is needed. The City hopes to increase the extracted amount of water by injecting cleaned water from the WRF into the Morro Basin at the Power Plant site, a brownfield. A brownfield is defined by the EPA as property with the “potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.” The water would then be withdrawn and sent through the WRF again.

The City does not have a permit to ex-

tract more than 436AFY. It’s questionable whether the State will permit extracting water from a brownfield for drinking. The latest City comment is that pumping will only happen during State Water shutdown in November, high demand in the summer, and to prevent salt water intrusion.

Mayor Heading continues to insist that the City will realize 80% of our water from the WRF. How?

Barry Branin
Morro Bay

Money for Streets?

When I walk around my house in the Morro Bay Heights neighborhood, there is rough cracked pavement on the streets where I live. The filling of the potholes is not enough for the neighborhood streets in the area. The only streets that were paved are Kings Avenue north and Ridgeway Street east and west, about five years ago. Where I used to live in Visalia, California, West Meadow Lane, just east of California state route 63, Mooney Boulevard east of the College of the Sequoias, was paved in 1986, about 36 years ago. In closing, does the city of Morro Bay have enough money to repave these streets south of Ridgeway Street?

Scott C. Presnal
Morro Bay,

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

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By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay will return to the athletic world stage in 2023, after the City inked a contract to host three, annual professional triathlons.

The City Council unanimously approved going ahead with signing the contract with World Triathlon Corporation, Inc., (Ironman Group) a for-profit company based in Tampa, Fla., that puts on the famous Ironman Triathlons and other athletic events all over the world.

The City, Visit Morro Bay and the Ironman Group will be partners in the endeavor, which is tentatively slated to happen some time in May 2023 and the following two years as well.

Visit Morro Bay is the business name for the Tourism Business Improvement District or TBID, an assessment district with its own governing board, which charges a 3% per night tax on motel, B&B, and vacation rentals, and uses the money to promote tourism.

It is the phoenix that rose from the ashes of the City’s tourism department, which died with the Coronavirus Pandemic response in June 2020, when the City ceased all promotions in response to the pandemic.

Cost to City Minimal

“IRONMAN 70.3 Morro Bay Triathlon” is predicted to cost the City some \$55,000 a year with \$40,000 in “staff” costs for police, fire, maintenance, etc., and \$15,000 for “logistics” to include parking, shuttling, waste management and no doubt numerous other things that will pop up as the event draws nearer.

However, City Manager Scott Collins said the City expects to be reimbursed for much of that cost — \$20,000 for the staffing and \$5,000 in shuttle costs.

Collins said that because the event has the potential to be a boon for the local economy, the money should come out of the Council’s economic development fund to cover whatever the company doesn’t.

Visit Morro Bay is paying the annual event sponsor fees to Ironman Group, which Collins said would be \$30,000 for each of the first two years and \$25,000 the third year. Visit Morro Bay will also provide the support staff with motel rooms.

The City is giving the company some red tape relief, too. “Given that the City is a sponsor of this event, alongside Visit Morro Bay, and Ironman Group,” Collins said, “the City will waive City permit fees and parking lot fees for the event.”

Public Inconvenience is TBD

What are the likely inconveniences to the public with the event?

It’s likely that public facilities and parking lots will be closed. Which ones depends on the courses chosen and where staging areas need to be set up.

The launch ramp may have to be closed to boaters and the Embarcadero closed to vehicles during the event.

Street closures and traffic controls through Downtown would seem inevitable, as the triathlon needs to use the bay, the streets and probably the highway, too for its various swim-bike-run segments.

City Predicts Boon

As with the now defunct Amgen Tour of California professional cycling race, which stopped in Morro Bay three times before it too died, the City believes it will pay off for local businesses, and add significantly to the City’s revenues.

“Overall,” Collins said, “immediate return from hosting the event will be felt in thousands of hotel and vacation rental overnight stays, economic activity at local restaurants, retail shops, grocery stores, gas, etc. and in the form of tax revenues to the City. To that end, Ironman Group has committed to the best extent possible to both use local suppliers for implementation of the event, as well as partner exclusively with properties located within City Limits for event-related athlete and staff room blocks.

“In all the expected tax revenue return to the City during the week of the event is anywhere from \$200,000 to \$300,000. Staff anticipates the greater return will come to the City post-event over time through the worldwide exposure of Morro Bay as a recreation tourist destination.”

Public Interest Mild and Mixed

Collins told EBN that there wasn’t a lot of interest from the public for or against the issue.

“Over the course of the two Council meetings the item was discussed,” Collins said, “we heard from a few folks who were excited about it and one or two who were concerned about impacts to the bay and how additional revenues from the event may be spent by the City in the future.”

Additional taxes the triathlons might generate would be primarily sales and bed taxes, and those go into the City’s General Fund. Any earmarks outside the general

fund for the money would have to be voted in by the Council, most likely during budget hearings.

Estero Bay News contacted the Ironman Group via email and got a response from their PR Office:

“Thanks for reaching out. We can confirm that we are in active conversations with the City of Morro Bay about hosting an event in the region and are hoping to have an official announcement in the coming weeks.”

From Humble Beginnings...

The Ironman Group has humble beginnings, as Collins said the company started out in the early 1970s as a group of friends and endurance athletes who put together informal competitions across three sports — swimming, cycling and running — which eventually evolved into the modern triathlon.

World Triathlon Corporation, Inc., was founded in 1990 by David Voth, James P. Gills and Valerie Silk and has grown into an international corporation that puts on triathlons, road and mountain bike races and foot races, some 374 every year in 53 countries and six continents.

California has hosted many of the Ironman events, and currently has long-running Ironman Group events in Santa Cruz and Oceanside.

Ironman Approached City

Collins came to Morro Bay from Santa Cruz and worked on their ironman event. He said Ironman Group approached the City earlier this year about doing an event in Morro Bay in 2023.

“Ironman Group representatives,” Collins said, “conducted a site visit in Morro Bay in March 2022 to get a lay of the land for a potential event. During that site visit, they met with City staff to discuss racecourse options, event logistics and community benefits and impacts. The Ironman Group then conducted extensive market research and determined an event in Morro Bay would complement their event offerings in Oceanside and Santa Cruz.”

The City Council was given a presentation on the matter and told staff to iron out a contract and bring it back by June 28 for approval, which it did.

When and What’s Ironman

The event would be a total of 70.3 miles, Collins said, and consist of swimming, biking and running segments.

They want to hold it in May 2023 “because of the warmer weather and the fact it wouldn’t conflict with their other California events,” Collins said. “They anticipate upwards of 2,500 participants and several thousand spectators to attend alongside participants.”

The event itself would be on a single Saturday and they plan to center it around the harbor and waterfront. They might need the Tidelands Park parking lot for a staging area and the transitions from swimming to bike and from cycling to the run, with a finish line somewhere on the Embarcadero.

A Really Big Show

Though the race itself is a 1-day affair, the set up work starts long before the starting gun goes off.

“Event set-up begins several weeks in advance,”



This photo from the 2018 Morro Bay Triathlon shows hundreds of competitors entering the bay for the swim portion of the event. Morro Bay signed an agreement with World Triathlon Corporation, Inc., to host Ironman Triathlons in 2023, '24 and '25. Photo by Neil Farrell

Collins said, “but actual impacts to the Embarcadero would be felt just a few days in advance, with full road closure just during the event day. The boat launch ramp would also be closed just the day of the event.”

They plan to swim in the bay but where they will enter and exit the water has yet to be determined.

With Morro Bay’s Triathlon, swimmers enter the water at Coleman Beach, swim along the riprap towards Morro Rock, turning around at a marker buoy and exiting the water back at Coleman Beach.

The biking portion would start somewhere on Embarcadero, travel up through town and most likely out onto Hwy 1 for what promises to be a long bike ride.

The running leg of the race is expected to start on The Embarcadero, run up through town and possibly out to Los Osos and back. Collins said none of the routes has been decided on and whatever the Ironman Group proposes will have to be reviewed and approved by City officials.

Chief among those is likely to be the Police Department, which would have to coordinate the event’s security and street closures. But the fire department would be expected to play a part in terms of medical aid and emergency response, and the harbor patrol and lifeguards will have to



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keep the swimmers safe. And the City maintenance crew will be the ones to clean up afterwards.

“The City permit team — Police, Fire, Public Works, Harbor and Recreation,” Collins said, “will closely coordinate with the Ironman Group on permitting, racecourse design, parking/shuttling, and logistics.

“In addition, the City will provide staff — law enforcement, paramedics, and lifeguards — during the event to ensure safety of all involved, including participants, staff, spectators and community members. The City will help link Ironman Group to local volunteers and help secure hotel accommodations for Ironman staff during the event week.

Events Are Far Reaching

Ironman triathlons have worldwide appeal; the events have a huge Internet audience; and it’s apparently a rich man’s game.

“According to athlete surveys conducted by the Ironman Group,” Collins said, “participants average \$247,000 in annual household income, 81% book hotel/vacation rentals when traveling to Ironman events, 69% of participants stay four or more nights in market during the week of the event, and a quarter of participants travel to the market to train in the weeks and months leading up to the event.

“Based on this and the fact of an influx of thousands of spectators, a typical Ironman event has a direct economic impact of \$10 Million on the specific market. Participating markets experience on average an \$800,000 impact on all tax revenues (federal, state and local combined).”

Ironman Group is big on the Internet. “The Ironman Group has a total digital reach of 6.4 million individuals worldwide. A Morro Bay event would be marketed through all of Ironman’s channels [Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, websites, apps, etc.]”

Event Fits Projected Image

Collins pointed out that the City has worked hard and spent a lot of time and money promoting outdoor activities including sporting events like professional surfing, and an Ironman Triathlon here is more of the same.

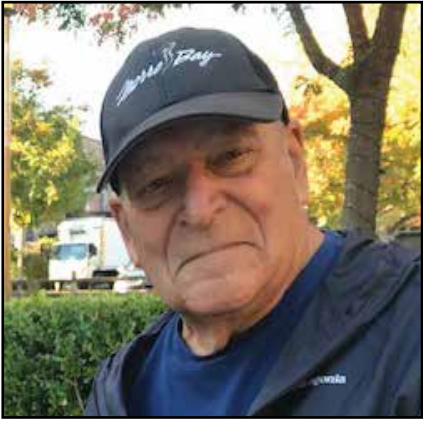
“Morro Bay has worked hard to link outdoor recreation enthusiasts with our community as a prime destination for those activities,” Collins said. “What started with the AMGEN Tour of California pro bicycle race, Rock to Pier Run, and local triathlon events, would be strengthened significantly by hosting an Ironman event that has international reach.”

But even more so, bringing this event to Morro Bay would re-establish Morro Bay in the eyes of worldwide professional sporting events. Collins was all-in.

“The economic benefits to the local business community, tax revenue to the City and long-term exposure to a world-wide audience,” he said, “in the opinion of staff, far outweigh the impacts of the event.”

Obituaries

Alan E. Dyer
1943 – 2022



Alan E. Dyer passed away peacefully at home, at the age of 79, after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Alan was born in Dos Palos, California to Lillian Petroni and Joseph Dyer. Alan graduated from Dos Palos High School in 1961 and went on to earn an associate degree from West Hills College. After college Alan went to work as a surveyor for the Bureau of Reclamation and worked on the California Aqueduct. Alan then went on to have a successful career in agricultural sales where he traveled throughout the state of California, making friends everywhere he went.

In 1970, Alan met the love of his life, Patricia Richardson. Alan and Patricia were married in 1971 and had one daughter, Shannon. Alan and Patricia spent many years living in Central California and enjoyed spending their vacation time on the Central Coast. In 2006 Alan and Patricia retired in Los Osos.

Alan loved to play golf and was an active member of the Sea Pines Men’s Club. He was an avid reader and enjoyed all types of books. Alan was a lifelong car-racing enthusiast; he enjoyed going to races, and watching races on television. During the late 1960s and early 1970s he owned a drag racing car. Many years later, as a retirement hobby, he was fortunate to help on a racing pit crew for his nephews.

Alan loved and adored his grandchildren and spent many hours cheering them on at their various sporting events and activities. Alan was known for his kind heart, great advice, and love of conversation.

Alan is survived by his wife Patricia, daughter Shannon St. Arnaud and husband Shaun, grandchildren Joel and Leah, and many loved family members.

The family will host a celebration of life on July 29, 2022.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Wilshire Hospice, UCLA Jonsson Cancer Center, or a charity of your choice.

Gari Dell Smith
1950 - 2022



Proud to be 3rd generation and lifetime Californian, Gari Dell Smith born December 12, 1950 in Susanville, CA passed away May, 30 2022 peacefully with family at home in Los Osos following a valiant battle against cancer.

The youngest child of Jack and Jean Smith, Gari Dell grew up in Los Banos, CA and learned to never ever say, “I’m bored” on summer vacation. Gari Dell enjoyed participating in Rainbow Girls, Girl Scouts, UMC youth, band playing the french horn and performance theater. Her fondest childhood memories were of camping at Dinkey Creek and going to Disneyland the day after Christmas with aunts, uncles and cousins.

Married in 1969 to Robin Clarno they had two children, Mark and Jena. The family moved to Paradise, CA and opened a small corner store. Her practical nature guided pursuit of skills in welding certification and employment as a pipeline welder for PG&E in the 70s and 80s. She was a resourceful single mother of two; a Girl Scout leader to her daughter Jena, as her mom Jean Smith was to her.

After divorcing, she returned to school; furthered her education at Butte College; graduated with building inspection technology; she was one of less than 100 combination inspectors in 1985 and later fifth in the world. In a second marriage, the Stinebaughs moved to West Point, CA; Gari Stinebaugh née Smith worked as a building inspector for Amador County in Jackson. After moving to Los Osos, Gari worked for the building departments of San Luis Obispo, Solvang and Atascadero. She traveled to hurricane and flood disasters as a FEMA building inspector and also worked in the recovery of Paso Robles after the San Simeon earthquake in 2003.

Her associations include Estero Bay United Methodist Church, Native Daughters of the Golden West, MENSA, and the Order of Eastern Star serving twice as Worthy Matron. Enjoyment came with gardening, cooking, making homemade Blackberry wine from her garden, crochet, crafts, and sewing. She also made and addition to the family, a foreign exchange student from Finland, Timo Pekurinen.

In her golden years Gari Smith (formerly Stinebaugh) cherished her grandchildren from Jena Clarno of Los Osos: Micah of Morro Bay, Megan, Jack, Destiny (May 31, 1999), Amber (also adopted and raised as Alexandra Stinebaugh of NY); and grandsons from Mark Clarno of Chico, CA; Benjamin, Samuel and Trent of Alb, NM; remembered by her older brother Brian Smith, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday July 24 at Estero Bay United Methodist Church, 3000 Hemlock Avenue Morro Bay. Burial service will be 1 p.m. Monday, July 25 at Redbank Cemetery in Clovis. Arrangements are with Los Osos Valley Mortuary. For more information contact mark.clarno@googlemail.com,



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Pickleball From page 1



Pickleball fans Margaret Lindt and Fran Gallo are ready to play and invite others to join the fun at Sunnyside Elementary School, 880 Manzanita Dr., Los Osos.

County Parks and Recreations operated six dedicated courts, not one of which was in Los Osos.

Margaret Lindt, of Los Osos, says the court situation does not meet the demand.

“In 2017, I learned how to play with my husband over at Del Mar Park in Morro Bay,” Margaret said. “I said, ‘How come we don’t have any place to play in Los Osos?’ So, I tried to convince the county to do something, but they would not.”

After that, Lindt stopped playing for a while, but last November she hit the courts with family in Santa Barbara. The fun of the sport rekindled her drive to advocate for more playing grounds locally.

“I have been pestering them [the County] since the end of November,” Lindt said.

Costs are part of the problem putting the nix on new courts, according to the County.

“There is demand for a lot of recreational resources in Los Osos and elsewhere in the county,” said Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation, Tanya Richardson. “This includes additional trails, athletic fields, dog parks, playgrounds and sport courts. We don’t have the resources necessary to meet everyone’s demands immediately, so we have to prioritize.”

The County did recently create a court, of sorts, at Sunnyside Elementary School in Los Osos. It is bare bones, and players need to bring a net, which can be purchased for about \$80 and up, but it does offer an alternative place to play. However, no tournaments are allowed. As it is, the court cost approximately \$400 and was paid for out of Parks & Recreation Budget.

The idea is unique in that it is trial run in a collaborative project with San Luis Coastal Unified School District. “The courts will stay as long as it is fulfilling a need and no issues arise from their usage,” Richardson said. “The courts are on school property, and the school is used for other purposes. The impacts on parking are the main reasoning for no tournaments.”

Sunnyside is a bounce in the right direction, but not a stopping point.

“They threw me a bone by doing that at Sunnyside. I really wanted them to make it equitable,” said Lindt, who wants to see either designated courts installed or at least the conversion of one of the tennis courts at Los Osos Community Park into a pickleball space.

The tennis courts offer the proper playing surface as opposed to the asphalt at Sunnyside, the former is better for the equipment and the players. A group of regulars use string and tape at the tennis courts to get some playtime in. They meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 3 p.m.

The county says that the tennis courts at the park are heavily used and bringing in a different sport would impact the other players.

“There are some courts that have been underutilized by tennis where shadow lines or conversion are appropriate, and we have done that,” said Richardson. “At Los Osos Park the tennis courts are not underutilized and are used quite frequently by tennis players. Adding the shadow

lines would significantly increase the demand for court time without increasing the supply of courts to meet that demand.”

There is a recently updated master plan for the Los Osos Community Park that includes a long awaited dog park. Some folks are hoping for more court space, but even if money dropped out of the sky, plans would be at a standstill until the Habitat Conservation Plan is complete.

“The area is large enough to accommodate both a dog park and additional courts,” Richardson said. “We need to wait for the Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan to be finalized so that we will know what conditions will be in place to proceed with any projects for this area. This is certainly a project that can be pursued once that HCP is final.”

In the meantime, Lindt and fellow player Fran Gallo will continue to utilize the Sunnyside space among others.

“This is a huge improvement for us,” Gallo said while setting up a net at the elementary school. “I would love for more people to join us. This group is very non-competitive; it’s not intimidating.”



Margaret Lindt and Fran Gallo set up a net at the recently created pickleball ‘courts’ at Sunnyside Elementary School.

A group of folks have starting playing most Sunday mornings at 8 a.m. at the school, and all are welcome.

“It has a social aspect to it; you can meet people there,” Lindt said. “With COVID, it’s very safe because you’re outside. For older people who may not want to play tennis anymore because of whatever reason, there isn’t as much moving around, you don’t have to hit the ball quite as hard, and you aren’t supposed to move backwards.”

There is good news for players, County Parks recently painted shadow lines on one court at Hardie Park in Cayucos and is currently working with Cal Poly to inventory tennis and pickleball courts and the number of active players in the county.

“This will give us the data to prioritize appropriately,” Richardson said. “We are saying ‘no’ for now but once we have more objective data, we will make our determination of the best path forward to meet everyone’s recreational need.”

Richardson said the next steps are to advocate for the completion of the HCP and then for funding the design and permitting of pickleball courts at the park.

For readers who are wondering why the game is called pickleball, there is some debate, but according to “Pickleball Magazine,” yes, there is one, pickleball was founded by Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell and Barney McCallum on Bainbridge Island, Washington in the summer of 1965. Within days, Joel’s wife, Joan, had come up with the name “pickleball”—a reference to the thrown-together leftover non-starters in the “pickle boat” of crew races.



Margaret Lindt plays pickleball at the new courts she helped bring to Los Osos.

Concrete Canoe From page 1



Cal Poly civil and environmental engineering students, from left Carson Bak, Sarah Scherzinger, Heather Migdal and Nick Toma paddle during the coed race at the 2022 American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Concrete Canoe Competition at Louisiana Tech University.

New York University-Tandon finished fifth.

Cal Poly also received the R. John Craig Memorial Award, which honors the New Jersey Institute of Technology professor who spent several years promoting his grand vision of the National Concrete Canoe Competition to the ASCE but died just months before the first event was held in 1988. In the years since, the competition has become a perennial favorite for tens of thousands of college students in the United States and beyond.

ASCE presents the award to the winner of the Coed Sprint Race as a memorial to the teamwork and dedication of Craig.

“It feels amazing,” said civil engineering senior Heather Migdal, construction team lead. “My team and I have sacrificed so much of our time working on the canoe this year, so taking home the national title made it all worth it. It truly became a labor of love.”



Cal Poly civil and environmental engineering students, from left, Nick Toma, Sarah Scherzinger, Heather Migdal and Carson Bak paddle during the coed race at the 2022 American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Concrete Canoe Competition at Louisiana Tech University.

Along with Migdal, the team included longtime faculty advisor Garrett Hall, civil and environmental engineering professor, and students Clarissa Arredondo, Carson Bak, Peter Cline, Nathan Felde, Sarah Scherzinger, Nicholas Toma and Michael Wang. Together they set a new standard



Cal Poly’s history-making concrete canoe team includes from left, Clarissa Arredondo, Nathan Felde, Sarah Scherzinger, Carson Bak, Heather Migdal, Michael Wang and Peter Cline. The team earned Cal Poly’s sixth national title — and is the most championships held by any school since the competition began in 1988. Not pictured is Nick Toma.

in the history of the ASCE competition.

The concrete canoe team operates under the umbrella of Cal Poly’s chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers. The team follows a set of prescribed rules govern-

Concrete Canoe Continued on page 17

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Moving Forward From page 1



“I probably wouldn’t have written the book without the fire.” Author Peggy Rothschild meant the Thomas fire that started in Santa Paula December 2017. “Gusty winds up to 70-mph took out all but four homes on our street in Ventura.”

know Rothschild’s personal story. I was intrigued by her book-cover bio — “After losing their home during a California wildfire, Peggy Rothschild and her husband moved to the beach community of Los Osos along the Central Coast. When not at her desk or out walking, you can usually find her in the garden.”

That was it? Reading between the lines I thought if ever there was a ‘Moving Forward’ story Peggy Rothschild may have been through hell and came back on the other side of paradise.

I attended her book signing at Coalesce Book Store simply to meet her face-to-face and let her know I was already a fan having read and loved her book. I instantly liked her warm smile and easy conversation. I also met Richard, her husband, who joined the conversation as if we were old friends reconnecting. A few days later I heard part of her interview on The Dave Congalton Show on KVEC. I learned several points about her book-publishing journey, but where was the fire story? We met for lunch in Los Osos — by now two friends ready to solve the worlds’ problems — while discovering each other one question answered at a time.

“I probably wouldn’t have written the book without the fire.” She meant the Thomas fire that started in Santa Paula December 2017. “Gusty winds up to 70-mph took out all but four homes on our street in Ventura. I had just left Yoga Class. It was so cold.”

She and her husband evacuated to a parking lot with both cars and four cats. “I had three. Richard took one. Our vet in Port Huenemi was so kind. He allowed us to board the cats and set up a treatment room for visits. We had just adopted Pinkerton. She was not happy we had to uproot her space again.”

As their house was being rebuilt Rothschild would stress whenever the winds kicked up. “I’d freak out at night and couldn’t sleep.” The rebuild was not what they had hoped it would be. “The only thing we loved was the

two-sided, see-through fireplace and a kitchen counter. It was not a happy place.”

The couple had vacationed in Cayucos and Morro Bay and had friends who had moved to Los Osos after their Ojai fire incident. “We didn’t know Los Osos,” Rothschild explained. “My best friend trained me on Zillow. We found five homes. We checked the fire potential. A fireman gave us comfort that Los Osos was somewhat protected by the marine layer wetness.” They moved in February of 2021.

“It was weird moving during COVID,” Rothschild said. “We still need to get to know our neighbors other than waving to them from our deck while we are enjoying a glass of wine and loving life again.”

COVID-time also birthed her book. “I met my agent (Melissa Jeglinski, Knight Agency) through a literary Twitter contest intended to polish an author’s query letter. I had written a couple of mystery books that were much darker. Some agents answered my query letters and even said they liked my work but couldn’t sell it. Melissa asked for 100 pages of my manuscript. She then called and wanted to talk. I thought we’d talk about revisions, but it became a long conversation, I really enjoyed. She suggested I write a ‘cozy’ mystery.”

Typically, this mystery style has a female sleuth, an unsuspecting victim, a quirky supporting cast, plus a trail of clues and several whimsical distractions. Expect all these ingredients in “A Deadly Bone to Pick,” including a precocious home-schooled child with a dog that needs training by Molly Madison, ‘dog wrangler extraordinaire.’

It just so happens Rothschild’s best friend, Nancy Withrow, is not only an animal communicator, but is also a dog agility trainer. Her expertise continues to school Rothschild in the language of dogs as she drafts “Playing Dead” scheduled to publish Feb. 8, 2023. She pitched me a piece of the plot, “Noodles competes in an agility competition and Harlow tests out his overactive smells during a Barn-hunt for rats. This has been fun to write.”

Peggy Rothschild seems to have found her community. She is already secretary of the Los Osos Valley Garden Club and joined SLO Nightwriters.

But what about Richard? After all, they were a couple who’d sat “in the fire.” Peggy said he’d been teaching career education classes in Ventura and music was his passion. I sensed he had not found his people yet. My connector personality kicked in, and I suggested we meet again in Morro Bay on a Thursday when Savory Palette presented Open Mic Night. Family and friends had said it was a welcoming place for musicians.

We spent most of the evening enjoying a variety of songsters and musicians sharing their well-practiced three tunes. Richard and Peggy appeared to enjoy it. I didn’t realize until after I had asked him about their decision to move to Los Osos that attending a musical event was a risk for him. They had given me an earlier clue; they had prepared an excuse to bolt if Richard was triggered more than he could handle. The couple had moved to paradise, but they had yet to heal from the trauma they had lived through in Ventura.

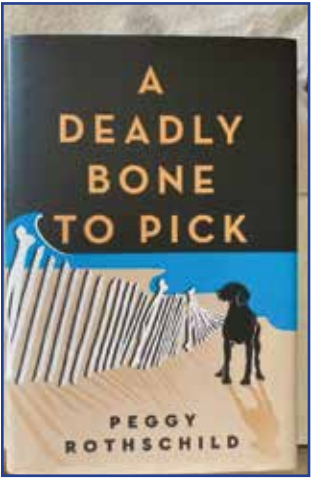
“We had to keep moving forward,” said Richard, “looking towards something else. Old solutions didn’t work.” He had a houseful of percussion instruments he’d gathered from all over the world. All were gone.

“State Farm would have replaced them,” he explained, but one day while at BooBoo Records, he walked out with CDs and the realization he would never go back to replenishing his collection. “I needed a fresh start. I’m spending my time learning jazz piano. I like doing it and I’m finding my way.”

There is still blowback that both Peggy and Richard Rothschild face. “We’ll take a walk and think we have it all behind us then see a house being built and all the anger with our contractor comes back,” said Peggy. “We could have taken a lump sum buy-out from State Farm, but we chose to itemize all we lost. It was a long intense memory trip searching the value of items we had gathered over the years. I’m compulsive about documenting everything we have now, but we are also not collecting. We are learning to take happiness in little bites where we can get it.

“We have a large family room where Richard spends hours playing his music,” she said and smiled her warm smile. “It has a view of Morro Bay.” And they have their cats. And Peggy is doing the publishing dance promoting her first cozy mystery while having fun solving her second contracted ‘cozy’ with her best literary buds, Harlow and Noodles.

Find “A Deadly Dog Bone to Pick” by Peggy Rothschild at Coalesce Bookstore in Morro Bay and Volumes of Pleasure Book Shoppe in Los Osos.



The mystery book authored by Peggy Rothschild.

Concrete Canoe From page 16

ing the design of the concrete and all other aspects of the competition. Students gain hands-on experience mixing and testing concrete, constructing the mold and reinforcement systems, applying the aesthetic design elements and ultimately fabricating the competition canoe.

The Cal Poly win snapped what had been a four-way tie of five titles with UC Berkeley, the University of Alabama in Huntsville and the University of Wisconsin. Cal Poly also won concrete canoe championships in 2010-12, 2017 and 2018.

“I’m so proud of our team for breaking this record and having the most all-time wins,” said Migdal. “We didn’t know what to expect when we got here because there hadn’t been a national competition in a few years but knew we would see some pretty canoes. It was just so exciting to see how everything turned out.”

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Community

Vote Fails From page 1

investigated the agency after allegations of mismanagement, fraud and embezzlement arose in 2018 surrounding the former IWMA executive director and the agency secretary.

The D.A.’s report found evidence of shoddy record keeping but not widespread fraud.

And yet the executive director was placed on leave and then retired. And the agency secretary faces allegations that she embezzled thousands of dollars.

What’s it Going to Cost?

So how much is this rate hike? One, 19-gallon waste wheeler, picked up once a week, was \$14.30 per month and increases to \$15.59, a difference of \$1.30 per month.

For one, 32-gallon waste wheeler, which is the typical size for residential customers, it was \$22.86 but changes to \$24.95, an increase of \$2.07 a month.

With 64-gallon wheeler service, it was \$45.76 but jumps to \$49.90, a hike of \$4.15.

Commercial customers are seeing more significant rate hikes. For a 32-gallon waste wheeler the smallest available, it was \$47.24 a month but is now \$51.52, a jump of \$4.28 a month.

If your business needs it to be emptied more than once a week — to a maximum of six times a week — the rates go up quickly.

One 32-gallon can picked up three times a week will cost \$131.55 a month and at the maximum six times a week, a 32-gallon can, will now cost \$260.65 a month.

And for a small, 1-cubic yard dumpster, the rates have gone from \$116.32 a month to \$126.87 a month for a change of \$10.55.

A 2-yard container dumped once a week will now run \$166.27 and goes up to \$1,153.56 for 6-days-a-week service.

Issues With the Vote

The failure of the protest vote, despite there being a lot of animosity right now between the City Council and many residents angered over the Water Reclamation Facility Project, should not be a surprise, given that local voters, customers and ratepayers have never successfully protested any rate hikes — for neither water nor sewer, and now garbage rates.

But this vote wasn’t without some controversy after a local woman tried to cast her protest vote at City Hall and ran into difficulties.

Donald and Kristen Headland registered a formal complaint on June 16 after Mrs. Headland had trouble voting at City Hall.

Mrs. Headland said that on May 31, she “went to City Hall to place my 218 Protest Vote into the City Clerk’s designated ballot box. I spoke to an office staff member with a request to ‘place my 218 Protest Vote into the ballot box.’ The office staff member stepped away twice to get guidance during our conversation only to return stating ‘Give it to me. I’ll give it to the City Clerk.’

“I asked to speak with the City Clerk,” she continued, “but was told that ‘She is not available.’ On this day, I did not give my 218 Protest Vote to the office staff member. I was not able to place my 218 Protest Vote into the designated ballot box.”

She goes on to cite from the garbage company’s Prop. 218 notice they received in the mail and from the City Resolution (No. 44-18) that votes can be delivered or dropped off at the City Clerk’s Office in City Hall.

But, “The public is not allowed to access the City Clerk’s office, located in City Hall, because there is a locked door in the lobby of City Hall, that prevents people from entering the building where the City Clerk’s office is located,” Mrs. Headland wrote.

Meets With City Officials

Mrs. headland emailed her complaints to the City Manager and the City Clerk and a meeting was set up for June 8 at City Hall.

At the meeting she explained what had happened prior. “I suggested the 218 Protest Vote, ballot box be placed in the lobby of City Hall, during business hours; secured in place, with a lock; under the surveillance camera in the lobby; and with observation from city office staff.

“This would allow parcel owners or ratepayers the ability to deposit their 218 Protest Vote in the ballot box during the 45-day voting period. The City Clerk stated the lobby of City Hall was not a secure location to place the 218 Protest Vote ballot box.

“I requested the 218 Protest Vote ballot box be placed in the office area at City Hall, near the customer window so voters could witness the office staff placing their 218 Protest Vote into the ballot box.”

City staff was apparently being told to place the ballots into the City Clerk’s office mailbox, which is a cubbyhole in a cabinet amongst many others in the copier room.

Mail Slots Not Secure

“The City Clerk’s mailbox has no form of security like a locking door on the front,” Mrs. Headland said. “The City Clerk’s unsecured, open-faced mail slot is not the location to place 218 Protest Votes during the 45-day voting period. This is a faulty chain of custody and not in any way secure.”

While she stressed that she has a right to place her ballot in a secured box, the City officials insisted the Clerk’s mailbox was secure. This was not sufficient for her.

“The current undocumented directions for city staff to route 218 Protest Votes into the City Clerk’s mailbox,” she wrote, “opens the opportunity of voter tampering and puts in question the integrity of the City of Morro Bay Proposition 218 Protest Vote process.”

City Manager Responds

The Estero Bay News asked City Manager Scott Collins about the Headland’s complaint. Collins acknowledged the meeting and said, “While we aren’t required to make any changes [as our protest process follows Prop 218 requirements], we found several of their suggestions helpful and are considering implementing in the future.”

EBN asked why they didn’t have a locked ballot box in the lobby?

“Because our City Hall lobby cannot be monitored and secured at all times,” Collins said, “the decision was made to handle these Prop 218 protests in the same manner as the 2018 Rate Prop 218 Protest [on raising water and sewer rates to pay for the Water Reclamation Facility Project] whereby all protests received by mail or hand-delivered are date stamped by the City Clerk or Deputy City Clerk and placed in a secured box in the Clerk’s Office, which is locked at the end of each work day and on weekends for security.

“As a courtesy, any member of the public who wishes to do so can go to the City Clerk’s Office and place their protest directly in the secured protest box.”

What’s the City’s process for handling these protest ballots? Collins explained, “The secured/locked box will remain secured until close of business on the day of the public hearing at which time we will count the number of protests received thus far, then add any received prior to the close of the public hearing and report out whether or not that number constitutes a majority protest.”

And the City is required to hang onto the ballots. “The protests are required to be retained for a minimum of two years following the public hearing,” Collins said.

City Hall also has a slot by the front doors where things like water and sewer bills and apparently protest votes can be dropped off.

“Yes,” Collins said, “they can drop off protests at City

Hall after hours through the slot. Or they can submit protests through mail or deliver directly to City Council during the public hearing.”

He disagreed that the mail slot isn’t secure. “The Clerk/Deputy Clerk handles all mail placed in the Clerk “mailbox.” We are confident our mail system is secure. Important to note Prop 218 protests are not ‘election ballots’ and elections are governed by a separate state code.”

Are City Staff Election Workers?

EBN asked Collins if the City Hall staffers were trained and certified election workers? They apparently are not, and the City doesn’t feel they have to be.

“The Prop 218 process,” Collins said, “is not an election and is not governed by the Election Code. The City staff member who received the protest is new and wanted to make sure with his co-workers they were handling the protest properly.

“They discussed how to handle the protest with their co-worker, and then advised Mrs. Headland they would deliver the protest to the City Clerk. My understanding is Mrs. Headland declined that option.”

“I think her preference,” he continued, “was to place the protest directly into the locked box, and did not want to leave the protest with front office staff to deliver to the clerk to time stamp and place in the box.

“Based upon our discussion with Mrs. Headland, in the future for Prop 218 processes [including for the remainder of this specific 218 process], as a courtesy, we will make sure that folks who want to place their protest directly into the secured box can do so.”

Complaint Points Out Issues

The complaint goes on to point out several things that the garbage company did wrong with its notices that were sent out that don’t appear to follow the State’s guidelines.

The Headlands’ letter requests three things from the City:

- A City Council review of the Morro Bay Garbage Co.’s “Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Solid Waste Rate Increase,” for compliance with State Law.
- Requested that a Resolution be adopted by the City Council, with step-by-step guidelines for parcel owners and ratepayers to personally deposit their ballot in the designate ballot box for submission and tabulation of Proposition 218 Protest Votes in the connection with rate hearings conducted.
- Recommend the designated 218 Protest Vote ballot box be placed in the City of Morro Bay, lobby of City Hall, during business hours, secured in place, with a lock, under the surveillance camera in the lobby, with observation from city office staff, for the 45-day Protest Voting period.

Winding Down From page 1

what has been complicated.

Today, Vistra Energy owns the majority of the property including some switchyard facilities, and PG&E still owns a portion, which has an active substation with high voltage transmission wires entering and leaving the plant and connecting with the power grid. Vistra’s switchyard was tested and is part of the DTSC’s order.

That PG&E switchyard however, was not part of DTSC’s investigations or orders, but would be investigated when it eventually closes and is removed, too.

Also, the study does not include the 165-foot tall powerhouse building nor the 450-foot tall smokestacks. Those too would be investigated when they come down, which Vistra and the City have agreed would happen within a few years. Otherwise, Vistra has to pay the City some \$3 million.

DTSC split the property into six “areas of concern” (AOC) and tested each one to gauge the levels of contamination found in both the soil and groundwater. The majority of the sites tested clean.

However, the main area of concern was also the largest of the sites, and includes the land where the plant’s fuel oil storage tanks were once located.

Those tanks were removed years ago, and it’s the same location where Vistra hopes to build the world’s largest lithium-ion battery energy storage facility (BESS), with a capacity of some 600 megawatts.

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Kevin says,

Look for the ANT on the Door



KEVIN O'CONNOR, President

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Community

That BESS project is just starting with environmental review by the City, which recently awarded a consulting contract and is now taking comments on what residents want studied in the EIR.

The final report also does not include metal waste cleaning ponds, where chemicals used to clean out the boilers was emptied to cool before being trucked away. The ponds underwent these same investigations back in 2008 and were given a “clean closure” designation, meaning they found no toxins.

But DTSC’s not done yet with the site. “DTSC will select a final remedy after reviewing and considering all public comments submitted during the public comment period and the public meeting,” reads its order.

The order gives a brief history of the site. “Prior to PG&E’s purchase of the MBPP site in 1951,” the report said, “the site was owned and occupied by the United States Navy and used as an amphibious training base [during WWII]. PG&E purchased the MBPP site in 1951 and construction of the power plant began in 1953.

“The MBPP first began producing electricity in 1955 and PG&E continued to use the MBPP as a power generation facility until 1998.

“In 1998, PG&E sold the power plant to Duke Energy Morro Bay LLC, which subsequently sold it to Dynegy Morro Bay LLC. Dynegy permanently closed the power plant in early 2014.

Interest in ownership was transferred from Dynegy to Vistra Energy in April 2018, and the site owner underwent an administrative name change to MBPC in November 2020.”

The history leaves out that the plant was purchased from Duke by LS Power, and Dynegy absorbed LS Power soon afterwards. Nevertheless the plant appears to have operated pretty cleanly for a major industrial site.

“During PG&E’s ownership of the MBPP,” the report said, “chemical storage and handling, as well as solid and hazardous waste disposal, were managed in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements. Occasional small spills and leaks that occurred as a result of routine operation were addressed as they arose.”

As part of the sale to Duke, DTSC said, PG&E undertook a “Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment,” and some sites were found that were polluted.

“Environmental conditions included both onsite and offsite areas,” DTSC said, “such as the landfills, the Marine Terminal Pipeline, and the Upper Tank Farm. Based on the Phase II ESA findings, eight areas of the site warranted further evaluation.”

The Upper Tank Farm referenced is located on a hill-top off Hwy 41 just east of the City Limits.

What did they find with all these investigations? “The media of concern are soil and groundwater. These media have detections of chemicals used historically at the facility for operations and maintenance including petroleum hydrocarbons, metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, pesticides, and volatile organic compounds, which were identified as chemicals of potential concern (COPCs) in the risk assessments.”

DTSC tested the soils and groundwater at the AOC sites against the potential risk to human health, and how such toxins might travel through the soil and groundwater, with the standard of continued industrial reuse.

It did not analyze the sites for contamination levels that would be acceptable for residential redevelopment — a much higher standard — which pretty much locks in what uses the property can have in the future.

Instead they studied the property with the assumption it would remain in industrial use and opted to file a “Land Use Covenant” or LUC with the County Assessor’s Office that would “not allow permanent or temporary lodging, a hospital or other health-care facility, school, day care center for adults/children, park, playground, or other recreational use at the site.”

This is on top of a covenant PG&E holds over the site, stating in essence that it always retains the industrial zoning. Also, the LUC prohibits the groundwater there from ever being used for drinking water.

During its decades of operations, the plant used

groundwater that was distilled — flashed into steam — in a small plant that produced ultra-pure water for use in the boilers.

It also used the groundwater wells for its firefighting systems, which includes a water tank in the southeast corner of the plant, near the end of Morro Avenue.

DTSC’s work has found little concern in terms of human health risks. “The HHRA,” the report said, “identified that there was no- to low-risk to the receptors listed above in all the evaluated AOCs, assuming the industrial/commercial uses evaluated and an associated Land Use Covenant in place to prohibit groundwater as a drinking water source.

“The low-risk scenario was for AOC 1 soil [at the tank farm], and only in one location with an exceedance of total petroleum hydrocarbons in the middle distillate range. Because this exceedance could be easily mitigated and is spatially bound in a small area, the net result was determined to be reasonably addressed by the industrial/commercial scenario evaluated, and no additional remedial action was recommended for any of the media in any of the AOCs.”

And, DTSC said only a portion of the tank farm site showed soil contamination above residential use levels, and the groundwater there is clean enough for drinking water use.

But, “because there are chemicals present at the Site in soil in a portion of AOC 1 at concentrations greater than residential levels, the entire Site does not meet the conditions for unrestricted land use. The ‘No Action’ alternative is, therefore, not viable.”

So overall the power plant’s been given a relatively clean bill of health by DTSC, at least until Vistra takes down the stacks and the power generating building, and exposes soils that haven’t seen the light of day since the 1950s.

A Dose of Good Dogma
Nope, It’s Not About Sex

By Lisa Ellman



“It’s not about sex.” That was my response to a comment made by someone at the dog park about his dog being a “horn dog” after his dog had been mounting another dog. We all see it happen, when dogs are playing or meeting. For some people the behavior can be absolutely mortifying, but it’s essential that humans take the sexuality aspect out of the behavior. Mounting, or humping, is a natural, common dominance behavior for many animals, including lions, horses and apes. The only time it’s actually about sex, or reproduction, in non human animals, is when a female, of the same species, is in estrus aka “heat” and is receptive and ready for copulation. Animals know this. They have been reproducing this way for eons.

One of the reasons we know that’s it’s often not sexual behavior is that it crosses gender lines. Female on female, male on male, on their back or face, female on male, or any which way. The behavior can also include inanimate objects — beds and stuffed toys are most common.

According to a local vet, one of the reasons a female will mount is due to the cycling of hormones at any given time. Even though the dog may be “fixed,” there are still hormonal cycles that drive behaviors. A female dog that is cycling may have a higher level of testosterone and act increasingly dominant toward her playmates by mounting

them. It’s a wholly normal behavior, and no matter how many times an owner yells at their dog to stop, or physically pulls them away, the behavior is likely to continue. You are fighting instinct. In my opinion as a trainer and observer of human responses for 25 years, trying to stop the behavior is not only futile, but also inhibits a dog’s learning in how to communicate with other dogs. When dogs are playing, and the behavior manifests, I believe it is important for the mountee to let the mounter know this is not acceptable. This happens when the mounted dog turns and snarls, snaps or growls at the mounter. This is a totally appropriate response, and if the mounter has been socialized properly, it will get the message and discontinue the behavior. Some dogs, especially young or complacent dogs, will just sit there and let the behavior continue, because they don’t know, or haven’t learned what to do. But at some point, the mounter will stop and play will continue. If it does not stop, and the same dog continues to torment, or bully, the mountee, then the owner must step in and take the dog away.

Ultimately, letting the dogs work it out and learn successful canine communication, helps prevent escalating the situation and a potential fight. The dogs must learn cues and signals from each other, particularly in social situations, what will be tolerated and what will not. Human interference prevents the dogs from learning these cues, which can lead to unfortunate consequences in the future.

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

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