

## Cayucos Vet's Hall Project Gets Underway



Kneeling from left with shovels in hand are: Dist. 2 County Supervisor Bruce Gibson; County Public Works Director John Diodati; and County Parks Director Nick Franco, with Cayucos community members raising their fists in celebration that the Vet's Hall is going to be repaired after being closed since 2016. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

Cayucos community members and County government leaders gathered Dec. 2 at the Cayucos Pier Plaza to mark the kick-off of a project to repair and restore the historic Cayucos Vet's Hall.

Dist. 2 County Supervisor Bruce Gibson recalled how many years ago while talking with a local man, he'd said it would be a snowy day in hell before it could be rebuilt.

"We stand in the middle of the civic heart of Cayucos," Gibson said to a gathered crowd of a couple hundred people. He noted that the Cayucos community, working with the County has been able to get quite a few things accomplished, such as the playground on the beach, the Pier and the Pier Plaza and its iconic dolphin sculpture by artist Dale Evers, as examples.

"This is emblematic of the community coming together with people who can get things done," he said, giving a nod to the County Public Works Department. "The resiliency of this community is absolutely extraordinary." He

also joked that Cayucos residents' first impulse would have been to roll up their sleeves and just go fix the building, but with a historic structure like the vet's Hall, it's nowhere near so simple.

He thanked several agencies and individuals who helped pull together the funding, including State Sen. John Laird; the California Natural Resources Agency; the State Coastal Conservancy; the State Parks Foundation and Coast District Superintendent Dan Falat.

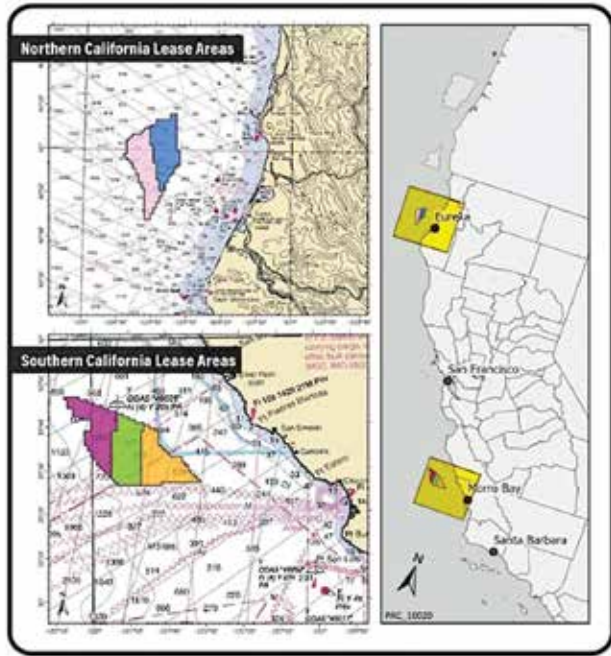
"Many layers of government came together to make this possible," Gibson said. "This has been a community hall forever.

Public Works Director, John Diodati said, "We love groundbreakings and kickoff meetings. We build things at Public Works."

He thanked the County Administrative Office for its support, and the County Controller the Auditor's Office, which gave the go-ahead for a bond sale to complete several projects — a new Probation Department HQ, and a new Cal Fire/Sheriff's dispatch center, as well as the Vet's Hall.

**Vet's Hall** Continued on page 22

## Wind Farm Leases Sold; Castle Wind Loses Bid



These nautical charts released by BOEM show the locations of the five offshore lease sites BOEM sold for \$757 Million.

By Neil Farrell

After delaying it for over a year, the Federal Government finally conducted its auction of offshore wind farm leases, but the company that came up with the idea in the first place and has been working with Morro Bay, missed the cut.

Castle Wind, LLC was not among the winning bidders for three leases off the Coast of San Simeon and two off the Coast of Eureka in Humboldt County.

Castle Wind had signed an agreement of support and the Company has donated thousands to local causes, in Castle's efforts to win a lease.

The three leases off San Simeon, which are expected to bring the power ashore at the Morro Bay Power Plant, went to: Equinor Wind US, LLC, which bid a total of \$130 million for 80,062 acres of essentially deep, open water; Central California Offshore Wind, LLC bid \$150.3 million for 80,418 acres; and Invenergy California Offshore, LLC, which bid \$145.3 million for 80,418 acres.

Off Eureka, RWE Offshore Wind Holdings, LLC paid \$157.7 million for 63,338 acres; and California North Floating, LLC paid \$173.8 million for 69,031 acres. The

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## A Creative Adventure



A view of the property where art will soon live for the community to see. Photo by Dean Sullivan

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

A story is unfolding at 5th and El Morro streets in Los Osos. It all began 20 years ago when artist Ted Emrick, known for his multi-media art and custom glass-work, drew out the plans for a piece of property he didn't yet own.

"I've been visualizing what to do with this lot for 20 years," said Ted of the land across the street from his home. "I always imagined I would build an art garden out

here for my clients to come and take a look — to show off my work because a lot of my sculptures are outdoor sculptures."

For the past two decades, life moved on with Ted investing in the community through raising a daughter, supporting his family and making a name as an artist, being a soccer and basketball coach, hosting climate festivals and teaching his craft at Morro Bay High School.

"It hasn't always been about my art," he said. "It's about what the art does with the

**Adventure** Continued on page 21

## Moving Forward: Top Dog Coffee's New Owner

By Judy Salamacha



Dustin at the barista station at Top Dog Coffee where he is often stepping in to train or help the staff.

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year wish from me to you.

Now my gift: My favorite word is serendipity — defined by me as a memory of a random connection I've experienced over the years while meeting and writing your stories. Recently I interviewed Dustin Blom, the new owner/operator of Top Dog Coffee Bar and roaster for Rescue Me Coffee Company. I'm now even more convinced nothing that happens is truly random. The universe teases us with options. And, only if we recognize the universe is sending us

**Top Dog** Continued on page 15

## Morro Bay Lions Give Thanks with a Car Giveaway

By Ruth Ann Angus



Ray Mc Kelvey of the MB Lions hands the keys to the car to Kelley Welch as part of their Car Giveaway Program. Photo by Ruth Ann Angus

It's darn hard to get around on the Central Coast if you don't have a car. Bill Todd, of Todd's Garage in Morro Bay, decided to do something about that and enlisted the help of the Morro Bay Lions Club. It was his idea to obtain older model cars in fairly good condition and fix them up and give them away to individuals who are struggling with transportation and finding it difficult to earn a living.

Transportation is often the stumbling block for a per-

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Incorporation not likely in Los Osos



By Neil Farrell

Efforts for Los Osos to incorporate into a “city” hit a speed bump when the Community Services District unanimously voted against supporting the movement.

The Los Osos CSD Board was asked to support an effort by a citizen’s group to try and incorporate the town and get out from under the rule of the County Supervisors, but instead supported efforts to work closer with the local advisory council on lobbying Supervisors to get more or better services for the South Bay.

It wasn’t the first time that the town has looked into incorporating but the issue that stymied it before — primarily a lack of tax revenues — is still there, as while Los Osos pays a lot of property taxes, it lacks a the sizable retail sector for sales taxes, and motels that could collect transient occupancy taxes.

Former County Administrator, David Edge, told the CSD there would have to be a big producer of sales taxes, like a big box store built here, to bring in more sales taxes.

And while there is a new motel going up on 2nd Street in Baywood Park, and another motel there recently expanded, Los Osos’ motel room inventory is nowhere near, for example, Morro Bay’s roughly 930 rooms — with over 100 more either under construction now or already approved and not yet begun.

CSD General Manager, Ron Munds, told Estero Bay News, “The 4-0 decision not to support incorporation was purely financial.

“The outcome was for the CSD [me] to reach out to LOCAC and community groups to organize some sort of forum to discuss what the residents want and how best to get there. I’ve already been contacted by LOCAC [Los Osos Community Advisory Council] so we will have some initial talks on how to move forward.”

Munds’ staff report on the issue laid out the gist of the matter. “There are no legal barriers to municipal incorporation,” the report said, “but there are some practical revenue limitations to consider. In particular, one requirement in state code is ‘the proposed city is expected to receive revenues sufficient to provide public services and facilities and a reasonable reserve during the three fiscal years following incorporation.’”

And in 2011 the State took a big bite out of a big revenue source for cities — vehicle license fees. The loss was such that it’s prevented other towns from incorporating.

“The VLF revenue changes were so severe that no new incorporations have been approved since 2011. Overcoming this would require the community to raise additional tax revenue to meet the requirements. Based on average VLF revenue from already established cities, Los Osos would need to generate an estimated \$1.7 million per year, or \$118.04 per resident in new taxes to make up for the unavailable revenue.”

And of course, any new taxes a new city might want to levy would need to be approved by voters, just as choosing council and mayor officers and incorporation itself would be decided by voters.

But a new city doesn’t have to staff all the services citizens would demand — including police protection, firefighting and EMS services, planning and building, recre-

ation, as well as water, sanitation and more.

The CSD already contracts with Cal Fire/County Fire and a city could contract with the Sheriff’s Department to patrol the new city, instead of forming a new police department.

Morro Bay has flirted with contracting fire services in the past as a cost saving measure, and even once had a proposal worked up by County Fire. But in the end, the residents didn’t want to lose the fire department nor the MBPD.

The City did, however, contract for emergency dispatching services with the Sheriff’s Office and Cal Fire, an arrangement that continues today.

Morro Bay also once briefly considered potentially “dis-incorporating” when the City’s budget was in the red.

But with unincorporated communities like Los Osos, it isn’t clear the value of the services the County does provide. “Prior to making an application,” the CSD report said, “the District could work with the County of San Luis Obispo to better understand the current level of service the County is providing to the community and the cost of those services. This could help establish a baseline of what costs a newly incorporated City would need to bear and more accurately estimate revenues. Partnering with the County to estimate this information promotes cooperation and reduces the risk of polarization or antagonism. Depending on what the District learns, the process could identify alternatives to incorporation.”

If the proposal had gotten support, it would have had to go through the Local Agency Formation Commission or LAFCo., a countywide agency that oversees annexations, incorporations and establishments of entities like a CSD, among other responsibilities, before going to the voters.

It would also have cost upwards of \$200,000, which in the end was too much.

It should be noted that the last town to become a city in SLO County was Atascadero, which incorporated in 1979.

Gibson Ekes Out Win in Dist. 2 Supervisor Race

New City Councilmembers Weigh in

By Neil Farrell

The final-final results are in on the Nov. 8 General Election in San Luis Obispo County and while some races tightened up a bit, none of the outcomes flipped; and the District Attorney has apparently cleared the County Clerk’s Office of wrongdoing over a discrepancy in the vote count that didn’t match up with a report sent to the Secretary of State.

**Gibson Hangs On**

In the only race that was still undecided, 4-term Dist. 2 County Supervisor Bruce Gibson eked out a win for a fifth term, as Gibson outlasted a challenge by Dr. Bruce Jones, a retired physician from Atascadero.

Dist. 2 was radically redrawn in 2021 as part of the reapportionment following the 2020 Census. The old Dist. 2 was entirely on the North Coast and included Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cayucos, Cambria, San Simeon, part of SLO, and the rural areas in between.

The new Dist. 2 map cut out Los Osos, Morro Bay and SLO and drew in Atascadero and San Miguel, which normally lean conservative and looked like a huge obstacle to the liberal-leaning Gibson.

But hard work by Gibson to introduce himself to the new constituents appears to have paid off, albeit barely.

In the final election results report from County Clerk Elaina Cano’s Office, Gibson collected 11,722 votes to Jones’ 11,709 a difference of just 13 votes.

It was the closest election Gibson has ever had in his five runs for the seat. The percentages of the vote were 50.03% for Gibson to 49.97% for Jones.

Overall 25,169 people voted out of 36,891 registered

Dist. 2 voters for a 68.23% turnout. But it might not be over with even yet, as Jones has indicated in media reports that he plans to demand a recount of the votes, which he will have to pay for.

**No Changes in Morro Bay**

There were no changes to the projected winners for two Morro Bay City Council seats as well as the Mayor’s seat.

Former Councilwoman and Mayoral candidate, Carla Wixom held on to her lead to unseat 2-term incumbent Mayor Dr. John Headding. Wixom finished with 3,325 votes to Dr. Headding’s 2,294 a difference of 1,031. That’s 59.17% to 40.83%.

In the Council races, Robin “Zara” Landrum finished first with 2,442 votes with Cyndee Edwards second with 2,005 votes. Landrum got 25.12% to 21.53% for Edwards. Third place went to Sarah Smith Robinson with 2,005 votes, 20.62%, losing by just 88 votes.

Also-rans were Casey Cordes (1,784 votes, 18.35%), and David Durringer (1,398, 14.38%).

Some 5,908 people voted out of 8,156 registered voters, for a healthy 72.44% turnout.

The new Council members were slated to take the oath of office at a special meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

**New Councilwomen Comment**

With two political neophytes about to take leadership roles with the City of Morro Bay, EBN asked them why they believed they’d been elected.

Edwards said, “I believe the voting results said a couple of things. One, the community felt there was a need for a change. Two, I think experience wasn’t the only reason the voters had in mind when they cast their vote. But, my experience did split the candidates with no experience in local leadership positions, so I think it was a mix of things, including emotions that are bigger than our local election.”

Landrum said, “Though I received some donations, I didn’t do any fundraising. I ran a grassroots campaign, I didn’t have a website or any social media presence. I walked through town, knocked on doors and met people.

“I listened to them and their concerns and was open and honest about my stance on issues. I had an amazing group of people who supported me by volunteering their time helping walk with me.

“I think my having deep roots here and truly caring about the future of Morro Bay must have resonated with people.”

Mayor-elect Wixom said, “ We are at a crossroads, will

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News

we stay a beach side community or will we become an industrial city? Many in the community I spoke with feel there has been a lack of transparency on many issues i.e. sewer cost, wind energy, battery storage, land-use issues.”

The election had a few focal points, namely the proposal to build a 600 megawatt Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the Morro Bay Power Plant. Asked if they felt that was a deciding factor in the election, Edwards said, “I think the overarching issue that I came away with from the community was the need to be heard. We’ve got to find a better way to deliver critical information and events to our community, one that is predominantly over 60 and may or may not have access or use social media.

“It weighs heavily on my mind. We need to see a greater investment and participation by our citizens; a variety of voices.”

Landrum said, “I think there were several issues. Of course the battery storage facility was a biggie as well as Measure B-22 [a proposed parcel tax to support the Harbor Department that failed]. A big takeaway was that the small, coastal fishing village feel of Morro Bay is very important.

“People want to protect the city and ensure that we don’t become the next SLO or Pismo Beach. As a community we are asked to watch and conserve our water usage and people wonder how the developments that are currently being built and proposed are allowed with these water conditions? “Residents are angry about recent zoning changes.

“There is a lot of dissatisfaction with the Planning Department and the red tape and excessive time it takes to accomplish anything. I also heard quite frequently that residents are frustrated by the lack of transparency and accessibility to the City staff. They feel ignored, they voice their concerns and yet the council votes the other way.”

As for that failed parcel tax measure, which would have provided over \$600,000 a year to repair and maintain public harbor facilities, each supports the harbor but didn’t feel a parcel tax was the way to go.

Mayor-elect Wixom said, “I first and foremost support a safe harbor; I believe we need to continue looking to grant funding for many of our projects. I’d like to work on public-private partnerships and will look to our wind energy partners for support in our harbor infrastructure needs, as well as long-term maintenance. I feel we have lacked in our planned maintenance and this has attributed to where we are now/”

Landrum said, “Measure B’s massive failure speaks volumes. While I think the infrastructure is very important to our city, some things need to be established. What are the real costs to repair the infrastructure and what is the order of importance to carry these out? The system that allowed the negligence to occur in the first place needs to

be corrected before any money is thrown at it. It makes sense to me that if these wind farm operators will be using our harbor, they should at least pay a portion of the repairs. The residents of Morro Bay aren’t the only people using the harbor, the costs should be shared accordingly.”

And Edwards said, “Yes, I have a couple ideas. One idea I expressed many times during my campaign, which was implementing a paid parking program on the Water-front.”

How do they feel about an all-female City Council, the first time that has happened in town history?

Edwards said, “I’m incredibly proud and excited to be a part of something bigger than me. To be able to serve this community is an honor. The fact that I get to do it with such a diverse group of women is an even greater accomplishment. I can’t wait to see what comes of it.”

Landrum said, “While I’m honored to serve on the City Council with the other women chosen, I don’t think it has anything to do with one’s sex. The election outcome proves that the voters in Morro Bay are very smart. They didn’t just vote for flashy ads and mailers, they voted for those they felt would best represent them.”

And the new Mayor feels honored. “I am honored to be elected as the fourth, female mayor in the City of Morro Bay,” Wixom said, “and equally as proud to serve with the other four women on City Council. I believe we will work collaboratively for the benefit of all in our community.”

Parcel Tax Fails

A citizen’s initiative to instill a \$120 a year “parcel” tax on all private property in Morro Bay to support maintenance of public facilities in the harbor, was soundly defeated, with 3,679 votes (64.23%) against Measure B-22, and 2,049 in favor (35.77%).

Measure B-22 needed over 50-percent to be approved and would have raised about \$630,000 a year. Instead the new City Council will have to search for ways to increase harbor department funding, as there are some \$10 million in unmet maintenance needs to public facilities — the launch ramp, floating docks, piers, moorings and slips — that must be dealt with.

And the San Luis Coastal School District’s Measure C-22 held on to its majority approval, easily surpassing the 55% needed for approval, garnering 22,144 “Yes” votes to 12,925 “No” votes, or 63.14% to 36.86%. It needed 55% to pass.

C-22 will add \$49 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value for all private property in the District, which covers Morro Bay, Los Osos, SLO and Avila Beach.

For a property worth \$500,000, the added tax would be about \$250 a year. The money is to be spent making upgrades at the District’s elementary and middle schools, including safety measures. A previous bond, 2014’s “Measure D,” has been spent on upgrades to the District’s high

schools in Morro Bay and SLO.

Ballot Discrepancy a Misunderstanding

The November Election, which is heading for a recount in the Dist. 2 Supervisor race, was not without controversy.

District Attorney Dan Dow’s “Public Integrity Unit,” which investigates allegations of corruption, had received four complaints about the handling of ballot in the Clerk’s Office.

“On Tuesday, Nov. 29,” reads a news release from the D.A.’s Office, “the District Attorney’s Office received a written referral from a federal law enforcement agency with information alleging potential election crimes occurring during the counting of ballots in San Luis Obispo County.”

The referral questioned “an unexplained increase of more than 300 provisional ballots that were announced when the Clerk-Recorder updated the public after counting ballots on Nov. 23, 2022,” the release said. “The referral alleged that election observers were ‘sent home’ and it was while no observers were present that the additional 300 or more provisional ballots were ‘found.’”

The D.A.’s PIU confirmed the discrepancy with County Clerk Elaina Cano, opened an investigation to get to the bottom of the matter. Cano said it was a matter of looking at the wrong spreadsheet.

“The provisional ballot envelopes received by all county precincts on election night,” Cano said in a written response, “were counted, reported and their numbers were included on an Excel spreadsheet utilized by my office to report the estimated figures to the SOS [Secretary of State].

“However, at the time of the first report to the SOS, the Excel spreadsheet did not generate ‘totals’ for the provisional ballots for precinct numbers 101-123 and 201-220, respectively, which cumulatively equaled 327 provisional ballots.

“Consequently, when my office reported the estimate of total unprocessed provisional ballots to the SOS on the second day after the election, the provisional ballots for the referenced precincts were not included in that estimate. When the results of the election were updated on Nov. 23, 2022, the provisional ballot totals for precincts 101-123 and 201-220 were captured and included in the ‘estimated’ numbers provided to the SOS on that same day.”

That appears to have satisfied investigators. “The District Attorney’s Public Integrity Unit,” the D.A. ‘s Office said, “has found no evidence that would contradict the explanation of a spreadsheet calculation error and therefore releases these facts to increase transparency and trust in the ongoing ballot counting by our county elections staff.”

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News

COVID, Flu Testing Sites Opening

The County Health Department is setting up community testing sites as it battles an outbreak of respiratory illnesses.

On Dec. 7 the County announced it was setting up three testing sites — the Paso Robles Train Station (800 Pine St.); SLO Vet’s Hall (801 Grand Ave.); and in Grover Beach (1336 Ramona Dr.).

The sites will “offer combined rapid testing for COVID-19 and influenza for all patients who are experiencing symptoms. COVID-only testing remains available for asymptomatic patients. There is no cost to the patient for either type of test at community sites,” the County said.

County Health Officer, Dr. Penny Borenstein said, “Finding out what virus is causing your symptoms — whether it’s COVID-19 or flu — is the first step in accessing the right treatment and guiding the steps you take to protect others from the virus. Providing this service at community sites also helps lift a weight from our local hospitals and doctor’s offices as they respond to an ongoing surge in respiratory viruses.”

What level of care the County delivers after you get tested depends on what’s ailing you. “Patients who test positive for COVID-19,” the County said, “may access Test to Treat services at the community site and take home a course of Paxlovid antiviral medication if indicated. Though Test-to-Treat services are not available for influenza, patients who test positive for flu may contact their regular healthcare provider to inform them of a positive test and ask about antiviral treatment for flu.”

Any tests given will stay on site and no take-home tests will be available, the County said.

The three sites are open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. but closed from 11 a.m. to noon for lunch, and 4-5 p.m. presumably for a dinner break. The Grover Beach site is also closed on Fridays.

If you have insurance the County will bill them and there’s no co-pay. There is no charge for those without insurance. The County and State have contracted with OptumServe to run the testing program.

To make an appointment, go online at: [slopublichealth.org/testing](https://slopublichealth.org/testing).

LOCSD, Morro Bay Join County DESAL Plan

By Neil Farrell

The Los Osos Community Services District has joined a growing number of local water agencies who have signed on to participate in a regional desalination project that’s led by County Public Works, and which just getting started now, but could be a long-term solution to the county’s water supply woes.

The LOCSD Board of Directors on Dec. 1 unanimously voted for a Resolution that approved the District participating in what’s being called a “Desalination Executable Solution and Logistics (DESAL) Plan.”

That DESAL Plan effort sprung out of a County Supervisor’s meeting last March wherein Public Works laid out all the various options for improving the drinking water supplies for the entire county.

Those included: conservation, storm water capture, Nacimiento Water Project optimization, Lopez [Lake] Water Project spillway raise and optimization, Salinas Dam [Santa Margarita Lake] transfer and spillway raise, State Water Project and Water Management Tools, recycled water, produced water from oil extraction operations, cloud seeding, and regional resiliency, according to a LOCSD report.

The competition for water supplies, in particular sources that depend on rainfall, “is anticipated to increase with new regulations related to groundwater/surface water interactions and minimum sustainability thresholds, water quality, environmental flow, and housing directives.”

The County report concluded that while many of these options are in the works, any sources that rely on rainfall aren’t reliable enough to sustain the County long-term, and only desalination can do that.

“Desalination,” the County concluded, “is the longest-term and most resilient strategy since it leverages a renewable, almost inexhaustible resource that would not be diminished by insufficient rainfall or water conservation efforts. Desalination is a drought proof solution for current and projected water supply imbalances caused by strained alternative supplies, increased demand and could be scalable such that its capacity could be expanded as future needs increase.”

In the LOCSD’s Resolution (No. 2022-32) one of the “where as” statements says: “Due to proximity to the ocean, and future water supply quantity, quality and reliability needs, the 2019 San Luis Obispo County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan and 2012 Countywide Master Water Report identify desalination as a water resource management strategy to pursue.”

The Resolution declares that the LOCSD wishes to participate in the DESAL Planning Phase 1, a designation that would add Los Osos to the analysis the County plans to do to be able to size a desalination plant, decide where it should be built and how water would be distributed to the various participating agencies. It should also give some idea of what all this would cost.

LOCSD General Manager Ron Munds was appointed by the board to represent the District on the DESAL Plan working group, officially called “The Countywide Water Action Team” or CWAT.

Munds told Estero Bay News that you won’t likely hear much from CWAT over the next year or two, when they get to a point where they can release a draft plan and then start holding public meetings in the various jurisdictions. It promises to be a long process.

Water agencies in SLO County are being given until next February to get on board with its DESAL Plan. A timeline presented by the County outlines a project that goes into 2041, as when construction might begin.

Even Phase 1 has four steps: Step 1 involves obtaining Resolutions of participation from the various water agencies; Step 2 finalizes the agreements to participate; Step 3 involves final details on the approach and presentation of a consultant contract to develop the project; and Step 4 involves approving the consultant contract and getting started on the actual planning of the project.

Morro Bay City Council also approved participating in Phase 1 of the plan, City Manager Scott Collins said.

Ironically, Morro Bay had a desalination plant but recently abandoned the brackish water wells strung along Embarcadero after they’d been inactive for years.

Indeed, the City only used its desal plant a few times since it was built in the early 1990s as an emergency response to another prolonged drought. The first time it was turned on the City discovered that the feed water was full of iron oxide (rust), which immediately plugged up the filter trains of the reverse osmosis plant. A settling tank had to be brought in to reduce the load of rust in order to use the plant.

The City discovered its wellheads and electrical panels were ruined and no good anymore, and has since completely dismantled its desalination filter trains and is no longer counting it as a water source.

The old plant itself was re-tooled to filter the fresh water from its Morro Creek wells and send that water to the Kings Street tank farm where it is blended with other sources. The City continues to have the State Water Project as its No. 1 source of drinking water.

The City is currently building its \$160 million Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) Project, soon to be completed, which is planning to inject highly treated wastewater into the ground in the Morro Creek aquifer to bolster the supply and block potential seawater intrusion.

The City claims the WRF plant will be capable of producing 80% of its annual water demand by recycling wastewater via an RO system located at the new WRF treatment plant.

And given the reaction of many in town over the high cost of the WRF, asking citizens to buy-into a County DE-

SAL Plan could be a hard sell to rate payers when the costs become known.

Desalination is traditionally among the most costly ways to produce drinking water because of the high energy needs to run the plant.

Police Investigate Fatal Crash



By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding a fatal motorcycle accident that happened on a tricky stretch of Atascadero Road (Hwy 41).

According to a news release, at 1:45 p.m. Nov. 28, police responded to a crash in the 500 block of Atascadero Rd., at the entrance to the Miner’s Ace Hardware shopping center.

A motorcycle, operated by Michael Barrios, 69, traveling east bound on Atascadero Road, collided with a truck, operated by Efren Morales, 51, while Morales exited the driveway from the businesses in the 500 block of Atascadero Rd., the news release said.

Both men stayed on scene as police and firefighters arrived. Barrios, “complained of pain and was transported to a local area hospital for treatment,” the MBPD said. “Barrios was admitted to the hospital where he underwent surgery and continued treatment in the ICU.

“On Wednesday, Nov. 30, Barrios died as a result of his injuries.” Morales was apparently not seriously injured.

The police said that alcohol and drugs “were not a factor in the collision.”

That entrance/exit to a major shopping hub in town has long been tricky, as drivers going west on the highway into town are often traveling very fast, and drivers going east are picking up speed as they head out of town.

In the late afternoon, the sinking sun can greatly complicate navigating the intersection as the glare can be almost blinding. But at 1:45 p.m. with the sun high in the sky, it wouldn’t have been a factor in this crash.

The City and SLO Council of Governments have for years been working on a plan to build a roundabout at the intersection of Atascadero Road and Main Street to alleviate traffic at that busy intersection.

How that will affect the traffic flow down the street at Miner’s and at three mobile home parks and condominiums all in the immediate area, is something officials will have to account for. Also, a 35-unit apartment complex is being built at Atascadero Road and Sunset Avenue.

With the current 4-way stop at Main, some motorists hesitate to go, which creates gaps in the traffic down the street for ingress and egress from the shopping center.

MBPD is asking for the public’s help with the accident investigation. If readers have information about the crash, call 805-772-6225.



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### Join us for Your Christmas Celebrations

More information: [StBensLosOsos.org](https://StBensLosOsos.org)

\*Service Offered In Person and Streamed On Facebook Live

**Sunday - December 18, 3pm:**  
**Christmas Carols at St. Ben's**

\*A Los Osos tradition. Enjoy carols from the centuries and a lively sing-a-long of familiar carols with the St Benedict's Singers conducted by Scott Glysson and accompanied by Paul Woodring

**Tuesday - December 20, 5:30 pm:**  
**Blue Christmas**

If the holiday season brings up memories of the past, of loved ones lost, or if there are reasons why this year is not especially bright, please join us for a short simple service which acknowledges that Christmas can be a difficult time for many of us.

**Christmas Eve - December 24**  
Carols & Communion around the Crèche - 4:30pm  
Sung Festival Eucharist - at 8pm, carols at 7:45PM\*

What could be better on Christmas Eve than a warm church decorated with candles, flowers and greenery and all your favorite carols in a joyful service of praise to God?

**Sunday - December 25, 10:30 am:**  
**Christmas Communion**

Quiet Communion Service with carols\*  
Followed by a light brunch

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News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Dawn Addis Sworn in as Assemblymember for District 30



Morro Bay’s Dawn Addis was sworn in as Assemblymember for District 30 in a ceremony at the State Capitol on Dec. 5.

The district that Addis now represents stretches from southern San Luis Obispo County to the Santa Cruz harbor, including the Monterey Peninsula, Big Sur, and the City of Morro Bay, where she recently served as a council member.

“I am deeply honored to earn the support of the people from the Central Coast, and I will make sure their voice is heard in Sacramento,” Addis said in a news release. “The California that people across the globe seek is right here in Assembly District 30. From Pleasure Point, across the Monterey Bay, and south along 200 miles of America’s most pristine coastline — we have so much to protect and be proud of. The great challenge of our times is to build resilience to the changing climate, expand opportunities for all and make it affordable to live here, while preserving the things we love. I look forward to solving these issues together, and I am ready to get to work.”

Addis is the first Democrat to represent the majority of San Luis Obispo County in the State Assembly since 1947. She is also the first Democrat from San Luis Obispo County to serve in the State Assembly since Alexander McMillan was elected in 1922. Addis is the first Democratic woman ever to hold this seat.

Morro Bay Council Approves Pride Flag

The Pride flag will be among those flown over Morro Bay City Hall.

The flag ordinance was a year in the works, and the Morro Bay City Council passed a policy that would consider the city hall flagpole government speech.

The pride flag will fly for the first time starting in June, known as Pride Month, of 2023. As per the ordinance, it will fly for a maximum of 30 days.

Prospects for National Marine Sanctuary

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has initiated the designation process for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary on the Central Coast.

The Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) submitted the sanctuary nomination in July 2015, and NOAA is considering sanctuary designation to protect the region’s important marine ecosystem, maritime heritage resources, and cultural values of Indigenous communities.

Join Central Coast State Parks Association, CA State Parks, and Paul Michel (regional policy coordinator for NOAA’s West Coast Office of National Marine Sanctuaries) for this presentation via Zoom.

This presentation will cover the background and status of the proposed new sanctuary. It will also highlight some of the main issues and challenges facing this coast and ocean and speak to the indigenous engagement and participation envisioned.

Free to join. Pre-registration required at <https://bit.ly/3XQTH48>.

Turn Your Irrigation Off



The Los Osos Community Services District recommends that folks turn off their irrigations systems this time of year. Los Osos is built on sandy soil, which causes water to percolate into the ground. It doesn’t necessarily flow to the surface.

“Many times, the source of a high usage investigation is an irrigation system leak. So, it is important to maintain irrigation systems regularly,” LOCSD officials said in press release.

Many homeowners have chosen drought tolerant plants or native plants in their gardens. Get watering guides from [SLOWaterwiseLandscaping.com](http://SLOWaterwiseLandscaping.com) under Watering Guide then Coastal Areas.

Watering Established Plants

If you are growing California native plants in their natural geographic range and they are properly sited, your drought tolerant plants should be able to thrive entirely on rainfall. They might look a little brown and drought stressed in the summer and early fall, but that’s natural. Water conservation is one of the key benefits of gardening with native plants.

However, most drought tolerant natives (and all riparian natives) can handle occasional light irrigation in the hot summer and early fall, and if you are careful, they’ll probably look a little greener and prettier with just a little bit of water. But again, be careful. Improper irrigation is probably the biggest reason — after poor plant selection — why some California native gardens fail. For more information, go to [bit.ly/3Uu6nel](http://bit.ly/3Uu6nel).

After the Festivities— Tree Recycling

Following this issue, the Estero Bay News team takes two weeks off, but this information will be needed before we return.

Waste Connections Mission Country Disposal accepts Christmas trees for recycling after December 25. Trees must be cut into 4 foot or shorter lengths, with no tree parts greater than 6 inches in diameter. Place tree parts in your green waste cart. Tinsel, ribbons, light strands, tree stands, and all other decorations must be removed. Flocked trees are not accepted and must go to the landfill or cut and fit into the trash cart.

If you do not have a green waste collection, contact your service provider for pick up. Christmas trees not in a cart and placed on the curb are subject to additional fees. For more information, call Mission County Disposal at (805) 543-0875.

Send your news, community and business briefs to [Editor@EsteroBayNews.com](mailto:Editor@EsteroBayNews.com).

Be sure to include the who, what, why, where and when information along with a contact person.



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Lifeguards Had a Busy Season

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay’s summer lifeguard season ended in October, according to the Harbor Director’s most recent report to the Harbor Advisory Board, and the young men and women watching out for folks on the beach had a busy summer.

According to Harbor Director Eric Endersby’s December department status report, the lifeguards had “1,224 contacts recorded with the public, gave 704 safety lectures, and had an estimated beach patron count of 108,258 people for the season.”

It should be noted that Morro Bay’s “City” beach extends from the Morro Rock Parking lot north to the mouth of Morro Creek. From there the State Parks Department’s Morro Strand State Beach starts and runs up to the City’s North Point Natural Area.

Beyond that is where the City’s newest acquisition the “Chevron Dog Beach,” starts and runs up to the southern end of Studio Drive in Cayucos.

Morro Bay’s lifeguards are posted on the City’s beach and lifeguards working for County Parks keep a watch on Cayucos Beach at the Cayucos Pier, otherwise there is a miles-long gap in lifeguard coverage on the North Coast’s longest beach.

Nevertheless, Endersby’s report said they didn’t lose anyone to drowning.

“They assisted 351 people in the water this summer,” he said, “and only had one true rescue — a testament to their preventive actions. We are so proud of our Beach Lifeguards and the job they do.”

The two portable watch towers that the City puts out on its beach every spring have been removed and stored, but the single blue tower installed at the base of Morro Crock remains. Endersby said they leave that one out even though there are no lifeguards on duty because it is useful as a lookout spot during ocean rescues by Morro Rock, where the majority of people surf.

Cambria Rapist Gets Life

By Neil Farrell

A Cambria man has been sentenced to life in prison for kidnapping and raping a woman, attacking her from behind on a popular walking trail in Cambria.

District Attorney Dan Dow announced Dec. 2 that Cambria resident Jesus Barajasvaldovinos, 33, was sentenced to 28-years to life in state prison after being convicted of “kidnap for rape, forcible rape, forcible oral copulation, and forcible digital penetration all with the allegation that the victim was moved to a place that substantially increased the risk of harm.”



Jesus Barajasvaldovinos

Barajasvaldovinos had earlier pled guilty to all charges. He will also be required to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

The crime occurred in Cambria on the late afternoon of June 27, 2021. The victim was reportedly walking along the Santa Rosa Creek Trail adjacent to Hwy 1 when Barajasvaldovinos accosted her and pulled her into the woods where he assaulted her.

D.A. Dow said, “The unthinkable violence committed against this woman warrants the maximum prison sentence. We applaud the remarkable courage of the survivor in reporting the crime and participating in the process that ultimately brought this sexual predator to justice.”

According to a Sheriff’s news release at the time of the crime, “The suspect held the victim against her will and sexually assaulted the victim over the next several hours before leaving her and fleeing the area.”

The case was also notable as the Sheriff Department’s first time using a new tool, “the ANDE Rapid DNA instrument to develop a DNA profile of the suspect.”

That quick DNA profile turnaround helped identify the likely suspect in the case and led to his arrest. The victim picked him out of a photo line up. She also testified against Barajasvaldovinos.

At sentencing the victim provided “a powerful written statement to the court,” the news release said, “describing the impact of the assault on her personal well-being, noting the ‘anxiety, paranoia, and heavy emotional trauma’ caused by the crimes.

“The sentencing judge described the incident as one of the most depraved acts the court has seen and that a life sentence is justified.”

The case was investigated by the Sheriff’s Office and the D.A’s Bureau of Investigation and prosecuted by Deputy D.A. Danielle Baker, who is assigned to the Sexual Violence and Child Abuse Unit.

Los Osos Woman Faces Prison on Felony DUI Charge

A Los Osos woman who was convicted in a fatal drunk driving crash 5-years ago, is in hot water once more after she was arrested in Morro Bay for suspicion of felony drunk driving, and again faces significant time in State Prison.

District Attorney Dan Dow’s Office said that Gianna Catherine Brencola, 23 of Los Osos on Dec. 7 pled “guilty” to felony DUI and now faces a potential six years in State Prison.

This latest incident occurred on Halloween Night and involved a destruction derby on the city streets. “Brencola,” the release said, “struck several parked cars while driving with a blood alcohol level exceeding .30-percent, more than three times the legal limit for driving which is .08 percent.”

There were no injuries reported in this incident but you can’t say the same for her previous DUI arrest.

“In a prior alcohol-related driving death occurring on Aug. 29, 2017,” the release said, “Brencola struck and killed Cal Poly student Kennedy Love who was riding his bicycle on Foothill Boulevard in San Luis Obispo. “

She was convicted of vehicular manslaughter for the crash and was sentenced to seven years in prison but got out early. “She received a seven year sentence but on Dec. 18, 2019, was released early by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation based on her participation in a community re-entry program while housed in



Gianna Catherine Brencola

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*Carla*

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News

prison.”  
Brencola is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 30 for this new DUI. This conviction carries a maximum penalty of three years, the D.A.’s Office said, but because of the 2017 accident, it could be doubled to six years in prison. She already has one “strike” against her for the death of Love, which the D.A. said counted as a “strike” under California’s Three Strikes Law.  
The case was investigated by the Morro Bay Police Department and was prosecuted by Deputy D.A. Lindsey Bittner.

Flores Prosecutor to Leave SLO D.A.’s Office



SLO County D.A. Dan Dow (left) congratulates Deputy D.A. Chris Peuvrelle on being hired as Supervising Attorney for Monterey County. Submitted photo  
By Neil Farrell

Winning one of the biggest murder trials in San Luis Obispo County history apparently didn’t go unnoticed, as the prosecutor in the Kristin Smart murder case

has accepted a new job in the county where the trial was moved.  
SLO County District Attorney Dan Dow announced that his Deputy D.A. Chris Peuvrelle had accepted a job as Supervising Attorney in the Monterey County D.A.’s Office, starting Jan. 1.  
“I could not be more proud of a prosecutor than I am today of Christopher Peuvrelle,” D.A. Dow said in a news release, “for the commitment and professionalism shown by his determined effort to achieve justice for Kristin Smart. I will always be grateful for his service and friendship.”  
SLO County is losing one of the rising stars in the D.A.’s Office. “While I am sad to lose Chris as a prosecutor in our community,” D.A. Dow said, “he is joining a great office under the leadership of [Monterey County] District Attorney Jeannine Pacioni and I am confident that he will pursue justice just as vigorously for the People of Monterey County. This rare opportunity to become a supervising attorney puts Chris’ experience and talent to great use and it will serve Chris and his family well.”  
Peuvrelle was lead prosecutor in the months-long trial of Paul Flores and his father Ruben Flores for the May 1996 disappearance and murder of Cal Poly freshman Smart.  
A change of venue to Monterey County Superior Court in Salinas was ordered and Peuvrelle took to court a purely circumstantial case against the two Flores men.  
Paul, who was also a freshman in 1996 and is now in his mid-40s, and his octogenarian father, had been the subject of suspicion since shortly after Smart vanished without a trace after an off-campus Memorial Day Weekend party. Paul Flores was the last person to be seen with Smart, whose body has never been found. He stood accused of killing Smart while raping her.  
The father was accused of accessory after the fact and helping his son hide Smart’s body, allegedly underneath a deck at his Arroyo Grande home but recently moved to a new, unknown location.  
In the end, a jury convicted Paul Flores of first-degree

murder but acquitted Ruben Flores of all charges.  
Peuvrelle won the 26-year old case that few thought would ever be brought to trial, albeit it was a split decision.  
Ironically, the two juries reached different conclusions regarding Paul Flores’ guilt, as one of Ruben Flores’ jury members said after the trial that they didn’t believe Peuvrelle had proven the murder case against Paul Flores. His guilt was a finding they had to make first in order to then convict Ruben Flores of a cover up.  
In essence, if there was no crime committed, there can’t have been a cover up.  
Convicted of murder, Paul Flores is scheduled to be sentenced on Dec. 9 in a Salinas courtroom. Peuvrelle will continue to work the case through the sentencing phase, D.A. Dow said.  
However, Paul Flores’ attorney has filed a motion to delay the sentencing that is scheduled to be heard on Friday, Dec. 2.



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Police Blotter



• **Dec. 4:** At 2:41 p.m. police responded to the 1900 block of Sunset where they towed off an offending, apparent road-hog’s car for parking blocking half the sidewalk.

• **Dec. 3:** Police responded at 4:17 p.m. to a disturbance in the 1300 block of Clarabelle. Logs indicated a 36-year-old apparent hothead was arrested for suspicion of domestic battery, damaging a phone to prevent calling for help, and being stoned on drugs, which explains a lot.

• **Dec. 3:** Police responded at 3:51 p.m. to the 900 block of Balboa where someone said a sneak thief snuck into their car and committed grand theft.

• **Dec. 2:** Police stopped at suspicious vehicle at 8:15 p.m. in the area of Main and Quintana. The driver, 52, was busted for suspicion of driving half cut behind the wheel.

• **Dec. 1:** At 11:39 a.m. police towed away a vehicle parked too long in the 700 block of Pacific, once again making the world safe for decent, Americans.

• **Nov. 30:** Police responded at 1:30 p.m. to a fire in the 1600 block of Main at Wee Shack. According to logs, a 21-year-old woman was arrested for suspicion of “starting a reckless fire within city limits.”

• **Nov. 29:** From the found-found files, someone found a li-cense plate somewhere in town and turned it over to police. Police also contacted a woman in the 200 block of State Park Rd., regarding her lost military I.D., no doubt a threat to national security and to Democracy its very self.



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• **Nov. 29:** A citizen in the 300 block of Preston Ln., told police that some monster got into his or her unlocked vehicle and stole undisclosed treasures.

• **Nov. 29:** Police responded at 2:50 a.m. to a disturbance in the 1900 block of Sunset. Logs indicated a 41-year-old louse was arrested for suspicion of domestic violence and battery. He spent the night in lockup, no doubt alone with his conscience.

• **Nov. 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:33 p.m. at Main and Beach. Logs indicated the driver, a 31-year-old fellow, was nailed for suspicion of driving ham-mered. His 35-year-old passenger got it in the end too for suspicion of being schwacked in public.

• **Nov. 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:45 p.m. in the 1500 block of Main. Logs indicated a 50-year-old tomato was busted for allegedly driving stewed.

• **Nov. 28:** Police responded to the 1000 block of Las Tu-nas where a guy said some apparent cat burglar got into his car and stole pepper spray, coins and cat treats.

• **Nov. 28:** police responded at 1:45 p.m. to a motorcycle vs vehicle crash at the entrance to Miner’s Hardware in the 500 block of Atascadero Rd. The motorcyclist involved was taken to the hospital and later died from his injuries.

• **Nov. 28:** Police responded at 11:45 a.m. to the 400 block of Fairview where a citizen told police that some scoundrel had stolen a “large amount of coins from under his friend’s house,” which no doubt pays better than an FTX crypto account but ultimately was no safer.

• **Nov. 27:** Police contacted a naughty boy at 8:30 p.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. The 41-year-old scofflaw had a half dozen bench warrants and contrary to recent trends, was actually taken to the hoosegow.

• **Nov. 27:** Police responded to the 600 block of Kings where someone left her vehicle unlocked and naturally some nefarious nocturnal ninny got into it and stole a credit card, which of course was immediately used to commit fraud.

• **Nov. 27:** Police responded to a report of people get-tin’ trashed on drugs at 10:35 a.m. in the 500 block of Quintana. A 21-year-old belle of the ball was nicked for suspicion of being high on dope. Her 30-year-old fellow traveler had a trio of bench warrants, so they shared a ride to County lockup.

• **Nov. 26:** Police were called at 4:22 p.m. to a disturbance in City Park in the 700 block of Harbor. Logs indicated an annoying flesh monkey was apparently raising Hell in the park and scaring all the straights. The 38-year-old candi-date for dingus of the year was nicked for suspicion of being stultified in public and she was hauled to the gaol to sleep it off.

• **Nov. 26:** Police responded at 11:06 a.m. to an injury traffic collision at Hwy 1 and San Jacinto Street. A 27-year-old woman driver was arrested for suspicion of causing a crash-n-dash accident and driving smashed.

• **Nov. 26:** At 10 a.m. police towed away an apparently rogue vehicle parked at Lila Keiser Park because the regis-tration was expired over 6 months, a hanging offense in this state.

• **Nov. 25:** Police responded to a disturbance report at 2 p.m. in the 600 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated the subject was taken for a 72-hour chill session with County Mental Health as a danger to himself, herself, itself, them-self and/or others.

• **Nov. 25:** Police responded at 1 p.m. to Rite Aid on Quintana where some annoying flesh monkey was being a pest. Logs indicated the fellow, who was 29, had bench warrants, but was issued another disappearance ticket and unleashed again on an unsuspecting world.

• **Nov. 24:** Police responded at 2:30 p.m. to a call for help in the 300 block of Shasta. Logs indicated an elderly person was “transported to SVRMC [Sierra Vista Regional Med-ical Center] due to grave conditions.” Police also apprised County Adult Protective Services of the incident.

• **Nov. 24:** Police responded at 4:47 a.m. to the 500 block of Atascadero Rd., for a woman apparently having a mo-ment. The 21-year-old hellcat was arrested for suspicion of disorderly conduct and went along peacefully to jail, all the Hell apparent gone from this cat.

• **Nov. 23:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:56 p.m. in the 1700 block of Main. Logs indicated the driver, 52, got hit with a “1-5-2” or driving under the influence of demon rum and a suspended license.

• **Nov. 23:** Someone found something somewhere in the 1100 block of Embarcadero. Somehow they decided they would someway return the something to the rightful owner, and so turned it over to some police officer who did some-thing with the something until someday, somebody might claim it, or something like that...

• **Nov. 23:** At 12:06 a.m. police spied a swizzle stick traips-ing down the 800 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the arrested the 65-year-old saucy fellow for suspicion of being soused in public.

• **Nov. 22:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 7:05 p.m. in the 300 block of Hill. Logs indicated a 27-year-old wom-an was nicked for suspicion of driving on a toot and child endangerment, presumably her own child.

• **Nov. 21:** Police responded at 10:57 p.m. to a disturbance in the 200 block of Harbor. Logs indicated some appar-ently foul-mouthed vixen, 52, was arrested for suspicion of trespassing, disturbing the peace by use of filthy language to do it.

• **Nov. 21:** Police responded at 8:30 p.m. to the 400 block of Quintana where someone at the Dollar Tree Store found a “white crystal-like substance.” No word on what the suspicious stuff was but given the location it was likely from China.

• **Nov. 21:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:54 a.m. on Hwy 1 at Atascadero Road exit. The 22-year-old borracho was hit for suspicion of driving spanked.

Sewage Spill at Men's Colony Plant

The County Health Department is warning everyone about water contamination after heavy rains caused a sewage spill at the California Men’s Colony’s sewer treat-ment plant, the Health Department said in a news release.

The spill started about midnight on Sunday, Dec. 11 and wasn’t stopped until 8 a.m., according to the news release. “A large, unknown volume of primary treated sewage,” reads he news release, “was released into Chorro Creek, due to equipment malfunction as a result of the heavy rain.

“Sewage overflowed from the sewer treatment plant and entered Chorro Creek.”

The sewer plant is located on land back behind Cuesta College and adjacent to the creek. Regular discharges of fully treated wastewater are regularly released into the creek, as the normal method of getting rid of wastewater.

The County was planning to test the ocean waters, as Chorro Creek ultimately empties into the National Estuary, which flows with the tides into Morro Bay Harbor. The County planned to take water samples at Morro Bay City Beach (at Morro Rock) and Morro Strand State beach on

Monday morning.

The County warns everyone to steer out of the ocean whenever there is a significant rain,

“Rainstorm runoff is known to transport high levels of disease-causing organisms such as bacteria, viruses and protozoa from the watershed and urban areas to the ocean,” the County said. “Such organisms carried into the ocean can cause skin, respiratory, and intestinal problems. Young children, older adults, and people with compromised immune systems are especially vulnerable to these water-borne pathogens.

“Surfers, swimmers and others are advised to avoid contact with ocean water during this period, especially in areas close to creeks, rivers, storm drains and other runoff outlets that empty into the ocean.”

For more information about beach water quality, go to the Public Health Department Beach Water Quality website at [www.slocounty.ca.gov/health/publichealth/ehs/beach](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/health/publichealth/ehs/beach), or call the Ocean Water Monitoring Program Telephone Hotline at (805) 788-3411.

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# Community

## Girls' Water Polo Takes Second in CIP



The 2022 Morro Bay High School Girls' Water Polo Team finished second in the Mountain League and second in the CIF Central Section Div. 2 Championships. Team members were from left: Coach Ryan Davis, Carly Muff, Maya Hitchcock, Tessa Standridge, Ava Beckett, Ryan Diodatti, Alana Sachs, Devyn Downing, Carmen Panian (holding the CIF Runner-up Plaque), Gwen Muff, Stella Mayhan, Josephine Davis, Quinn Wilson, and Pearl Wishon. Submitted photo

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay High's Girls' Water Polo Team had another outstanding season finishing just short of winning a league and CIF Championship.

The Lady Pirates finished the regular Mountain League season in second place, Coach Ryan Davis said, finished second to League Champions Arroyo Grande, which Morro Bay lost to in the league championship match. It was the second straight year that the Pirates have finished behind the Eagles.

But the successful league season led to a CIF Playoff berth, as the Lady Pirates were the No. 2 Seed in the CIF Central Section Div. 2 playoffs, Coach Davis said.

In the playoffs, the girls dunked Santa Ynez, 14-2 in the first round matchup. The quarterfinals pitted Morro Bay against Strathmore High, and again the Lady Pirates sunk their foes' battleship with an 18-3 soaking.

That impressive win led to a Semi-finals match with Redwood and again the Lady Pirates' scoring machine was in high gear recording a 12-4 rout and sending the girls to the CIF Central Section Div. 2 Championship game for the second year in a row with mighty Garces High of Bakersfield awaiting.

But alas, it was not to be as Garces prevailed over Morro Bay 14-10 in a high scoring affair. In the title game,

it was a tough pool to swim in for the visiting Lady Pirates.

"It was a very large and noisy crowd in Bakersfield," Coach Davis said. "It was hard to hear each other in our time out huddles."

The Lady Pirates fell behind early, coach Davis said, and trailed 4-1 at the end of the first quarter. Garces' leading player, Abbey Schechter, who is bound for U.C. San Diego next year, scored twice in the first quarter.

The teams traded scores over the next two quarters with Morro Bay closing the gap to 9-8 by the late third quarter.

In what was a tough and physical contest, Coach Davis said two of his senior starters — Carmen Panian and Stella Mayhan — fouled out in the second half. That's when Garces picked it up on defense.

"Garces did a good job double and sometimes triple teaming Josephine," Coach Davis said, "and holding her to only two goals."

Several players had standout performances in the title game. "Carmen Panian led our scorers with four goals," Coach Davis said. "Devin Downing had an outstanding game defending Abbey [Schechter], holding her to only two goals over the final three quarters."

Morro Bay's "Pearl Wishon had a great game coming off the bench," Coach Davis said, "and Quinn Wilson led the team in Drawn Power Plays."

The team ended the year 21-12 and though the season ended a little short of a championship, second place in CIF is plenty to be proud of.

"I am extremely proud of how well the girls played," Coach Davis said. "While it is frustrating to fall a little short for the second year in a row, there aren't many people that expected us to be on the verge of beating Garces, a perennial Div. 1 school."

The Lady Pirates' season is a testament to their determination and mental toughness. "These young ladies have worked very hard over the last couple of years to build this program into one of the top programs in the state," Coach Davis said. "We are very excited to reload next year and make another run at it."

**Takin' Care of Business** From page 9

Morro Bay Vet's Hall, 209 Surf St.



The food drive benefits local food groups, the Food Bank, and the free Morro Bay Community Dinners Program (held Monday nights at the Vet's Hall).

## New Executive Director for Hearst Foundation




Mitch Massey has taken the helm as Executive Director for the Foundation at Hearst Castle. He replaces Michael Young who retired after serving in the position for the past five years.

Massey was selected, in part, because of his incredibly diverse background and an extensive network stretching across the state of California, the Foundation said.



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Community

“This is the opportunity of a lifetime to be chosen to lead the Foundation,” said Massey in a news release. “I have involved myself for over 30 years in the region as a TV sportscaster at KSBY-TV and as an executive for Heritage Oaks Bank.”

Massey was also CEO of iiiT Inc. in Newport Beach, which supported nearly 200 non profits in the country.

“Mitch has come aboard bringing new energy and a complete dedication to The Foundation at Hearst Castle,” said Abe Marquez, board president. “His experience and vast network of contacts is far-reaching. I am looking forward to exciting days ahead as we at the Foundation continue to preserve the jewel of California State Parks, and most importantly, give opportunities to young people through our Build the Dream Through STEAM education programs.”

In his tenure, Young’s contributions to the Foundation included a complete organizational rebranding and developing a STEAM-based youth educational program.

“Vision accomplished,” said Marqueze. “I, along with the entire Board of Directors at The Foundation at Hearst Castle want to wish Michael the best of luck in his new endeavors, and express our deepest and sincerest thanks for his accomplishments.”

The Foundation at Hearst Castle’s mission is to support the conservation and restoration of Hearst Castle, and to offer youth programs for underserved middle school students — to enhance the appreciation of the art and architecture of this world-class museum and monument, ultimately enriching the visitor experience and inspiring future generations of visionaries.

*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.*

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The zoom meeting All About Monarchs: What They Need and How We Can Help takes place Dec. 15 from 6:45 to 7:45 p.m. There is no registration required, and it is free and open to the public. The Western monarch’s population is dwindling. Biologist and Xerces representative, Jessica Griffiths, teaches about the Western Monarch’s overwintering habitats and nectar sources along the Central Coast of California. She discusses how climate change and pesticides are affecting the Western Monarch and makes suggestions about how we can help monitor the species and plant for their survival. This is a pre-recorded presentation from the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden’s Science Saturday Series in November 2020. The link is <https://bit.ly/3pAKlts>, the meeting ID: 753 644 4586 and the passcode: LOVGC.

Forever Stoked Holiday Art Show takes place on December 17 from Noon to 8 p.m. at 1164 Quintana Rd. in Morro Bay. Join the celebration of Central Coast inspired art featuring original paintings from Charlie Clingman, Chris Pedersen, Peter Pierce, Ken Chistensen and more. They will also have a large selection of prints and gift items for purchase. This is a free event and everyone is welcome. Photo Caption: “Kelp Slab” Oil on Panel 24x36 inches by Peter Pierce. Photo Credit: Photo by Elliott Johnson.

WWII History on the Central Coast: Traveling Exhibit continues at the Spooner Ranch House, Montana De Oro State Park, San Luis Obispo. This traveling exhibit details the history and implications of World War II on the Central Coast, specifically in Morro Bay State Park and Montaña de Oro State Park. Located at the Historic

Spooner Ranch House in Montaña de Oro State Park. The Ranch House is open daily from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is free to enter. The exhibit will be on display through the end of 2022.



Take and Share King Tides Photos via the California Coastal Commission’s King Tides Project. The next King Tides are December 23-24, 2022 and January 21-22, 2023. Use your smart phone or digital camera to participate in the project by taking and uploading photos of king tides through the King Tides photo upload form at [coastal.ca.gov/kingtides/participate.html](https://coastal.ca.gov/kingtides/participate.html). Start by choosing where you’ll go to take your photos and then look at the tide map to find out what time and how high your king tides will be. Take your photos as near to high tide time as you can. Your photos will be displayed on an interactive map. (If you’d like to share a video clip of king tides, email [kingtides@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:kingtides@coastal.ca.gov) for instructions.)

The most important thing to remember is to be safe! Take extra precautions when you walk on slippery areas or near big waves, and always be conscious of your surroundings and the weather conditions. Don’t turn your back on the ocean! Be aware that shore birds may be taking refuge in areas above the tide line - don’t flush them out in the process of getting your shot.

Some of the most powerful images are taken in areas that are subject to flooding and erosion, and of places where high water levels can be gauged against familiar landmarks (such as cliffs, rocks, roads, buildings, bridge supports, sea walls, staircases, and piers).

In addition to uploading your photos, you can also share them on social media using #kingtides.

A staged reading of Barbara Robinson’s “Best Christmas Pageant Ever” takes place December 16 and 17, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and also Saturday at 2 p.m.

The Herdman’s were absolutely the worst kids in the world. They lied and stole and smoked cigars—even the girls! So how did these kids end up in the starring roles in the church Christmas Pageant?

Get into the holiday spirit with this hilarious, heart-warming tale, read by some of our favorite performers like Oz Barron, Zoe Saba, Jill Turnbow, John Geever, Lisa Woske, Colin Toohey, and Janet Stipicevich.

CCAT is located at 1350 Main St, in Cambria. Tickets are \$10 and are available online at [CambriaArts.org](https://CambriaArts.org) or at the door.



The Cambria Center for the Arts, 1350 Main St in Cambria, has a Call for Artists for the Gallery’s next exhibit: New Beginnings. This exhibit will feature artist members and non-members of Cambria Center of the Arts, January 6 through February 26, 2023.

From December 30, 2022, until January 2, 2023, artists can register and submit art online to the Cambria Center for the Arts, as the Gallery will exhibit original artwork by its member artists. While the intent is to encourage and showcase current members, new and non-members are also welcomed to participate. As a benefit to members, a discounted fee of \$5 per item will be charged for this New Year exhibit.

On-line registration is required. The date to drop off artwork at the Gallery is January 3, 2023, from 10 a.m. until noon.

Opening reception for New Beginnings is Saturday, January 7 at 4:30 p.m. until 6 p.m., and the exhibit will adorn the walls through February 26, 2023.

For membership and exhibit details, go to [CambriaArts.org/home](https://CambriaArts.org/home). Contact the Gallery with any questions [gallery@CambriaArts.org](mailto:gallery@CambriaArts.org)

Merry Christmas  
& Happy New Year

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Community

Events and Activities From page 11

Visit the traveling exhibit titled “Seeds: Nature’s Artful Engineering” at the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History. The Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Seeds: Nature’s Artful Engineering is an exhibit vividly portraying the incredible diversity, ingenuity and beauty of seed dispersal mechanism of plants native to California. Seeds and their dispersal mechanisms are one of the final stages in the evolutionary biology of flowering plants. Against many, many odds they are the final step in ensuring the survival of plant life. The exhibit is based around 30 + high-resolution, close up photographs of the seed structures and dispersal mechanisms of California native plants taken in the wild and in garden settings by Northern California plantspeople and naturalists, John Whittlesey and Jennifer Jewell.



The Central Coast Watercolor Society issued a Call for Artists for Aquarius 2023 California Open Watermedia Exhibition, taking place February 23 - April 3, 2023, at Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main Street, Morro Bay. Aquarius 2023 presents the best in watermedia painting, representing a wide range of subject material and techniques, from experimental to traditional, and encourages support for water-media painting as a vital, enduring and expressive artistic medium. The call for entries is open to CCWS members as well as to non-member watermedia artists residing in California. Submissions close at midnight January 8, 2023. The juror for selection and awards is the internationally recognized, award-winning watercolorist Fealing Lin. Over \$3000 in cash and merchandise will be awarded. The complete prospectus and entry form are available at CCWSART.com. For more information, contact Exhibition Chair Diann Johnston at diannj@gmail.com.

Santa Claus makes a special stop at the Grover Beach Community Library to read to all the good little girls and boys on his list. Don’t miss Storytime with Santa on Monday, December 19 at 10:30 a.m. at the library, 240 N. 9th St. Join us for holiday stories and treats. Santa will read “The Night Before Christmas,” take photos and visit with the kids. Bring your cameras and take candid photos your family will love. For more information, call 805-481-4131 or send an email to Admin@groverbeach-library.org.



End 2022 with some laughs at the SLOFunny New Years Eve Comedy Show, presented by Estero Bay Community Radio on December 31 at 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. The lineup of comedians to help you end the year with a little joy and some huge laughs includes host Thomas Connolly, local comedian Ron Swallow with Jonas Garvin, featuring Jen Murphy and headliner Adam Yenser. Doors Open 30 minutes prior to show. Tickets are \$25 online and \$30 at the Door (cash or Venmo only). The Show is 21 and up, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. All proceeds from the bar and concessions go to 97.3-107.9 The Rock.

Celebrate the holidays and Christmas Eve with Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main Street, Morro Bay. This exciting art exhibit is just in time for those last minute gifts. A diverse collection of paintings, photography and fine crafts, spanning a variety of artistic mediums from traditional to contemporary is offered on the Art Center patio by local artists. Hand-made crafts include fiber, wood, glass, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, hand woven fiber arts and more. Enjoy music, sweet treats including hot apple cider and Farmer’s Market. Winter Market will be on display Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24 from 12 – 4 p.m.. Attendance is free and open to the public.

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.

# OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

Morro Rock to Moro Rock



Words and image by Catherine Kornreich

Did you know that there are two dome-shaped granite monoliths in Central California, with essentially the same name? Moro Rock is in the Sequoias, and looks remarkably similar to our very own Morro Rock in Morro Bay. One is up in the mountains, the other by the sea: in fact, on a fairly horizontal line dissecting the state. I have heard we humans tend to classify ourselves as either mountain people, or ocean people. I’ve always gone back and forth between these favorites. Maybe because I grew up in the San Joaquin Valley and visited both on a regular basis: the ocean was two hours west, the mountains two hours east. But I’ve now lived in San Luis Obispo County since 1976, including three of our beach towns, so I figured I had subconsciously made my ultimate choice. I delight in the salty smell of the sea, moan of the foghorn, colorful sunsets and crashing waves. Don’t get me wrong. I do still love the mountains: the intoxicating smell of pine, the wildlife, and snow in winter.

Out & About Continued on page 13

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# Obituaries

## Evans Cowan 1950 - 2022



Evans Cowan, dedicated husband, father, grandfather and friend, passed away in Atascadero on Tuesday November 15, 2022. Family was by his side.

Evans was born in August 1950 in Pasadena, CA. He lived in many cities in the LA area, when in the 1990s he moved to Arcata, California, where he met his wife, Joanne Smith, at Humboldt State University. While attending Humboldt State, Evans earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree in social work, later graduating from California Coast University with his Master's Degree in psychology.

Evans proudly served our country in active duty in the Army being honorably discharged in September 1982. He later served in the Army National Guard as a warrant officer, stationed at Camp San Luis Obispo, where he served at-risk youth at Grizzly Youth Academy. When Evans was 60, he retired out of active duty and became a state parole agent ending his long professional career in 2011.

In 2011 he became co-owner of a counseling service in Morro Bay, All People Services. In 2020, he had the opportunity to join his son in his painting business and together they became partners and co-creators of Paneless Painting Company, LLC.

Evans was a dedicated family man, a veteran of the U.S. Army, a mental health worker, a retired parole officer, a social worker and a business owner. It can honestly be said he spent his adult life in service to everyone he knew, striving to help anyone in need at any given moment. Evans was a loyal and dedicated friend to all.

In his free time, Evans enjoyed being with family and friends, planting and working in his yard, taking photographs of beauty only he could capture, and tinkering in his garage fixing things around his home. He was also a card carrying member of the NRA, collecting different guns that held meaning to him. Often he could be found on the range with family or friends target shooting.

Evans was a devoted husband and very best friend to his wife Joanne. The two of them walked through life in

step, hand in hand, a shared and true abiding partnership. Evans fulfilled and exceeded every promise made 30 years earlier in his wedding vows. Every day this love story was to have and to hold, from this day forward for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, and most importantly to love and to cherish. Evans cherished every day with his wife and family. He deeply loved and cared about his two children, Brandi and Jeremy, and they deeply loved him in return. He was their "Squ," the glue that kept the family stable during turbulent times. Evans was not a man of a million sentimental words but rather a man of a million sentimental and kind gestures.

Evans is, and will always be, so deeply loved and will forever be missed by so many. His legacy is imbedded in the fabric that makes up his family. The beautiful imprint that he has made on this world will forever be carried on and treasured by those he left behind. His wife Joanne gave him a card once, epitomizing what he meant to so many, "I am amazed by you. Every time I'm convinced the world is coming apart at the seams, there you are with your needle and thread." And there he was.

Evans is survived by his loving wife, Joanne, and two children, Brandi and Jeremy Smith, his beautiful grandchildren, Alexandria Maynard and Ryder Daniel James, and his brother-in-law, Joseph Brannon. A military service will take place at the Los Osos Valley Cemetery on Los Osos Valley Road at 12 p.m. December 30.

You will be missed Evans, you are so Loved!!!

## Peggy Jean Cole - Walters - Haynes 1943 - 2022



Peggy was born in Kenton, Ohio to Eva Katherine and Clinton Earl (Russ) Cole, and passed at the age of 79 in Fresno, CA with her family by her side. She is survived by her sisters Sherry Cole and Sharon Van Buskirk and brothers Donald and Ronald Cole, her daughters Lori Ann Walters, Lisa Rodriguez, Linda Martin, and Heather Moss, son-in-law Sal Rodriguez, and her ten grandchildren.

Peggy grew up in Ohio and married Kenneth Walters in 1962. While raising their four daughters, Peggy worked as both a custom-order seamstress and upholsterer and ran a childcare business from their home in Michigan. In 1977, Peggy and Ken decided to become modern day pioneers and move the family across the country with a U-Haul and station wagon to begin a new life in sunny California. They made their home in Los Osos, and Peggy resumed her childcare business while Ken worked at California Polytechnic State University, allowing Peggy to raise their family and the children of so many others, for more than thirty additional years. Peggy was an amazing domestic diva and multi-tasker. You could often find her prepping a homemade craft for her daycare kids, sewing costumes for school theater groups, or preserving her garden harvest. A fond memory is Peggy leading children's church and running out to the car between Sunday School and church to punch down rising bread dough for her family's weekly pot-roast dinner that always included her famous rolls. Peggy's strong faith helped her weather life's many storms with grace and positivity. She will be dearly missed.

A celebration of life and a day of thanks for friends who supported Peggy's family through this trying time will take place at her daughter Linda's house, 1550 8th St. in Los Osos, CA, on Saturday, December 31, 2022, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Please stop by to visit with the family, enjoy some of Peggy's favorite New Year's Eve snacks, and share memories of this beautiful community matriarch whose love and nurturing touched so many young lives. In remembrance of Peggy, plant a garden, teach a child to knit or crochet, bake a pie from scratch, pick up fish and chips to munch on while watching the surfers in Morro Bay, or extend a helping hand to others in need.

**Out & About** From page 12

I've skied and camped numerous times up there, relishing the sights and sounds of nature.

Visiting recently, I noticed the symbiotic relationship between mountains and the sea: rivers. Rivers link the two.

As I type, I'm sitting on a bench directly above a gurgling river in the Sierra foothills, a bit lower than Moro Rock's elevation. I'm pleasantly surprised to see there's quite a bit of water cruising by.

The Bookshelf Writers, authors of this very column, get away every October to write for a week, and this year we chose Three Rivers, a sleepy little town with only 2,700 residents.

The other three ladies tend to focus on writing and editing their manuscripts. But me? My stories are often little bursts of random observations or experiences. That pretty much sums up my personality, too.

So here I sit, contemplating the river.

The sound of the water is mesmerizing, putting me in a trance, which is why I often set my ambient music to river sounds at bedtime.

I appreciate the roar of the ocean, and the quiet stillness of the mountains, but this in-between melody sings to

**Out & About** Continued on page 14

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# Community

## Old Scam Returns



An old scam is making the rounds again and the County Sheriff is none too pleased about it.

According to a news release, “We’ve been informed that several people in the last few days reported they had been contacted by someone claiming to be from the Sheriff’s Office,” Sheriff’s spokesman Tony Cipolla said. “The scammers used technology that made it appear the call was coming from the Sheriff’s Office on caller ID.

“Residents were warned there was a warrant out for their arrest because they failed to appear for jury duty. The scammer has even used the names of actual judges to make the call appear to be legitimate.”

These scammers tell the targets they can clear the warrant by making arrangements to give them information from a green dot card/prepaid debit card, Cipolla said. Though it sounds rather lame, sometimes it works.

“In one of those cases,” Cipolla said, “a county resident fell victim to this scam with a reported loss of \$5,000. We want to warn residents these calls have no connection to the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office or Superior Court.”

Neither the Sheriff’s Department nor the Courts will contact you by phone if you skip or miss jury duty. Anyone who receives a call like this should report it to their local law enforcement agency.

Cipolla asked that everyone “inform your family and friends about this scam, so they can be prepared in the event they receive a call like this.”



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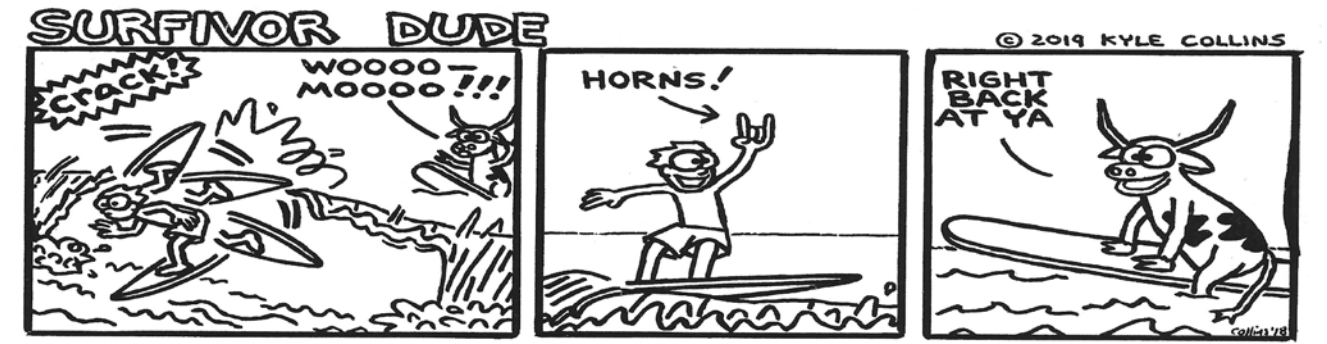
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## Pancakes with Santa



The Kiwanis Club of Bay Osos assisted the Morro Bay Department of Recreation Services by providing cooking services for the Pancakes with Santa event held at the Veterans Hall in Morro Bay on December 4.

Edward Gallardo lived up to the Kiwanis motto of “Serving the Children of the World,” even if it is one at a time. Los Osos Kiwanians “Flapjack” Annie Whaler, Deanna Sweeney, Warren Lilly, Peter Starlings, Olivia Martinez and Al Strunk, served as elves to help Santa feed the kids and their parents. Photo by Al Strunk



Out & About From page 13

another part of my soul.

On the first day, we were excited when we saw an enormous black bear sniffing along the far shore. Then on our second day, a brownish bear walked 15 feet in front of us, on our patio. His eyes popped out even farther than ours did, and we scurried off in opposite directions. It was delightful to watch him balance on a trail of semi-submerged rocks as he made his way across. Delightful, because we watched from relative safety inside the house.

And we saw that, yes, Virginia, bears DO \*\*\*\* in the woods. And in the rivers.

I look through the window now, at my writing buddies, and watch them peck away on their computers.

We all write in different genres, we each have a unique writing style. I sit back and reflect on our bond: thinking that just like the river before me, my writing pals and I all came from different tributaries, merged, then came to rest at the base of our own Morro Rock.

## Boat Parade was a Rain Out

Well Bah-Humbug, Morro Bay canceled the Lighted Boat Parade this year.

The annual parade of boats decorated with Christmas lights that has become a signature event in Morro Bay was originally scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 3 but due to a rain, it was postponed until Dec. 10.



But Mother Nature was again anticipated to rain on the parade and so on Dec. 8 the City canceled it altogether.

“Due to anticipated weather,” the City said in a news release, “wind, rain and safety of our boaters and public, the Lighted Boat Parade has been cancelled this Saturday, December 10th. The lighted boat parade will be back next year in 2023,” with of course the caveat — “weather permitting.”

And since the original parade date was postponed a week already, it’s apparently two strikes and you’re out for 2022.

## PERFUME

Big brown bear, why you do dat to me?  
Peek on out tween the V in a tree?  
Yes I know this land is free...  
But bless your heart, you made me pee.

We saw each other at the very same time  
Don't you know that peepin's a crime?  
Our eyes popped out, you spun on a dime  
You raced to the river, I spilled my wine.

You know these past days I was sittin' outside  
I was writing a story...well...at least I tried.  
Maybe I just sat out there to hide.  
But if I'd seen you watching, I swear ida died!

So now I huddle in my dark bedroom,  
I'm scared, so my story is doom and gloom.  
And soon I find I'm starting to fume  
Afraid I'll again smell your dank perfume.

### Edward Jones

Happy Holidays

Enjoy the holiday season with friends and family!

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This day and age, it is not hard to lose faith in our fellow humans.

But every so often something happens to help you see the generous, kind, thoughtful, and caring side of others.

I have never been so scared in my life. I am 60-years-old thinking I still have a lot of years ahead of me. Leaving the doctor's, I cried. I was so scared. I went home and informed my housemate and long-time friend, Amy, who for the last 10 years has been by my side through a myriad of problems and if it wasn't for her I don't know where I would be today.

One coworker in particular I'd like to send a huge shout out to is Shayla Shannnon, who took it upon herself to start a GoFundMe page for me. Then, Dean Sullivan, owner of the Estero Bay News, offered to put info about me and the GoFundMe in the next edition of the paper. I owe a big debt of gratitude to Dean and Theresa-Marie Wilson for making sure my story ran.

But in spite of all the generous donations and kind words of support, in the end, the biggest gift of all has been regaining my faith in people, in our community. I cannot express how much I appreciate our community. I thank you all.

*Michael Olson*  
*Los Osos*

**I**would like to respond to Ms. McPherson's many criticisms (Vol. 4, Issue 23 ) of Mr. Farrell's reporting on Morro Bay's new sewer plant (11/3/22).

He was not critical of the facility from the “beginning” in 2016 when she became a city council member.

Many news stories start as tips with unnamed sources, i.e., Watergate, Kristin Smart. Farrell reached out to the city for verification and quoted the Public Works Director with his responses.

How does one report a series of blunders without sounding like there was a series of blunders? Don't shoot the messenger.

I agree the surcharge will not go up because that's where it was set. However, nothing prevents a 218 vote to increase monthly fees.

I disagree with the definition that “the overall project” is “the plant plus debt service.” It is also the pipelines, unfinished wells, existing sewer plant tear down and clean up, and land negotiations with Cayucos. The cost is not “less than anticipated.” The cost continues to rise.

To claim that a story is “buried” if it is on page 7 out of 28 pages is stretching it. If it were printed on page 24, yes.

Perhaps McPherson is protective of the plant because she voted for its location and contractors knowing it was both the most expensive location and project.

*Betty Winholtz*  
*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](mailto:editor@esterobaynews.com)*



**Top Dog** From page 1



A party in the Top Dog Coffee garden to say goodbye to Suzanne and Patrick and introduce Dustin and Timmie. Pictured are Patrick, Dustin and Timmie.

a potential gift, and only if we are willing to pursue it, will that once casual connection become more than a pleasurable memory. The people we have met along the way just might become our ultimate connector to finding our next passion or our life's purpose for being. I have been the beneficiary of this gift multiple times. So, as you consider goals for 2023, recall who you've met along the way that might help you accomplish something you've always wanted to do. It will bless both of you to reconnect.

I believe Dustin and I met casually 15-16 years ago when I started writing for The Bay News or Sun Bulletin. I was interviewing Patrick Bietz, then the new owner of 2 Dogs Coffee on Main Street, Morro Bay. I pressed him on why he would give up his mega career as an award-nominated Hollywood movie sound editor to roast coffee and serve breakfast burritos in Morro Bay.

At the time Dustin was a student at Cuesta and eventually he'd graduate from Cal Poly. He and his surfing buddies were regulars at 2 Dogs. Dustin had already developed a savvy palette for tasty coffee and had chosen Patrick's roast his favorite. I can hear Pat taking a quick pause from our interview to say, "Hey, guys! Surf good today?"

Patrick and Suzanne would soon move across the street and rename their dog friendly garden café Top Dog Coffee Bar and ultimately develop a unique concept for their Rescue Me Coffee Company.

Dustin grew up in White Hall, CA – barely a blip on the map with a population of 12, he noted. He started developing his barista skills in high school at a favorite coffee stop in El Dorado County/South Lake Tahoe. Through mid-college, he continued to learn to love the smells and tastes of his preferred roasted coffee all the while he and his mother would dream about owning a coffee shop together once she retired.

**Top Dog** Continued on page 20

HAPPY

holidays



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12 Days of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas my true love sent to me: A Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the second day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the third day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the fourth day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the fifth day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Five Golden Ring, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the sixth day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the seventh day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Seven Swans a Swimming, Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the eighth day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Eight Maids a Milking, Seven Swans a Swimming, Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves, and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the ninth day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Nine Ladies Dancing, Eight Maids a Milking, Seven Swans a Swimming, Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves, and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the tenth day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Ten Lords a Leaping, Nine Ladies Dancing, Eight Maids a Milking, Seven Swans a Swimming, Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves, and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love sent to me: Eleven Pipers Piping, Ten Lords a Leaping, Nine Ladies Dancing, Eight Maids a Milking, Seven Swans a



Swimming, Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves, and a Partridge in a Pear Tree  
On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love sent to me: 12 Drummers Drumming, Eleven Pipers Piping, Ten Lords a Leaping, Nine Ladies Dancing, Eight Maids a Milking, Seven Swans a Swimming, Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves, and a Partridge in a Pear Tree.  
According to Wikipedia: The exact origins and the meaning of the song are unknown, but it is highly probable that it originated from a children's memory and forfeit game. The best known English version was first printed in English in 1780 in a little book intended for children, Mirth without Mischief, as a Twelfth Night "memo-ries-and-forfeits" game, in which a leader recited a verse, each of the players repeated the verse, the leader added another verse, and so on until one of the players made a mistake, with the player who erred having to pay a penalty, such as offering up a kiss or a sweet.

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December 15, 2022 - January 12, 2023 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News



# Community

## 'Twas the Night before Christmas



By Clement Clarke Moore

**T**was the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St Nicholas soon would be there.  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tinny reindeer.  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name!  
"Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! On, Cupid! on, on Donner and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"  
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St Nicholas too.  
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.

A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back, And he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack.  
His eyes-how they twinkled! his dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.  
He had a broad face and a little round belly, That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly!  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself!  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head, Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, And filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk.  
And laying his finger aside of his nose, And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose!  
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

*Clement Clarke Moore (1779-1863) wrote the poem 'Twas the night before Christmas also called "A Visit from St. Nicholas" in 1822. It is now the tradition in many American families to read the poem every Christmas Eve. The poem redefined the image of Christmas and Santa Claus. Prior to the poem, St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, had never been associated with a sleigh or reindeers.*

*Moore was a reticent man and it is believed that a family friend, Miss H. Butler, sent a copy of the poem to the New York Sentinel, which published the poem with the condition that the author would remain anonymous. The first publication date was Dec. 23, 1823 and it was an immediate success. It was not until 1844 that Clement Clarke Moore claimed ownership when the work was included in a book of his poetry. Clement Clarke Moore came from a prominent family and his father, Benjamin Moore, was the Bishop of New York who was famous for officiating at the inauguration of George Washington. The tradition of reading 'Twas the Night Before Christmas on Christmas Eve is now a world-wide institution.*

Pretty skimpy on the ornaments there, Furless

Photo by CatNoirCC.com

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Music

New Years Eve  
at the Rock



**S**LO Brew looks like the biggest party on the Central coast for this New Years Eve. With 4 rooms of music, 2 main stages, a jazz lounge, and a mini night club, this is a mini festival all on one property. The Lineup includes L'Eclair, TROPO, Brothers? (Nick Motel & Ethans Burns), Dante Marsh, Moonshiner Collective, Mother Corn Shuckers, and more. Limited tickets are \$125 and include: 4 drink tickets, light bites all night, photo booth & fun party activities, and a midnight countdown on both main stages. Get your tickets soon as they will sell out! More info and tickets at [slobrew.com](http://slobrew.com)

Photo courtesy of Stephen Heraldo

**Thu., Dec. 15 • 7:00pm**  
Emily Franklin  
Saints Barrel  
1021 Higuera St,  
San Luis Obispo

**Thu., Dec. 15 • 6:00pm**  
Hotel SLO: Dante Marsh  
Hotel SLO  
877 Palm Street,  
San Luis Obispo

**Thu., Dec. 15 • 7:00pm**  
SLO Food Bank drive  
w/ Dan Horne Band  
SLO Brew Rock  
855 Aerovista Place,  
San Luis Obispo

**Fri., Dec. 16 • 7:00pm**  
Danny Lux  
The Fremont Theater  
1035 Monterey St,  
San Luis Obispo

**Fri., Dec. 16 • 7:00pm**  
David Orr  
SLO Cider Company  
3419 Roberto Court, Suite  
C, San Luis Obispo

**Fri., Dec. 16 • 7:00pm**  
JD McPherson  
SLO Brew Rock  
855 Aerovista Place,  
San Luis Obispo

Molly Ringwald  
Project 80's  
New Years Eve Bash  
at The Siren



**K**nown for a super fun, an all-out 80's dance party experience, The Molly Ringwald Project is set to rock the Central Coast to ring in the new year at The Siren in Morro Bay. Tickets are already moving fast and will sell out in advance. The \$50 ticket includes party favors, food, desserts, and a champagne toast at midnight. Get your tickets at [thesirenmorrobay.com](http://thesirenmorrobay.com). Party starts at 8:00.

Photo by Molly Ringwald Project

**Fri., Dec. 16 • 7:00pm**  
Merry Shuckin' Christmas  
The Siren  
900 Main St, Morro Bay

**Fri., Dec. 16 • 6:00pm**  
Sherita Perez Music  
SLO Wine and Beer Co  
3536 S Higuera St #250,  
San Luis Obispo

**Sat., Dec. 17 • 5:30pm**  
Damon Castillo  
Holiday Party  
Court Street Terrace  
999 Monterey St,  
San Luis Obispo

**Sat., Dec. 17 • 9:00pm**  
Bad Bunny Night  
The Fremont Theater  
1035 Monterey St,  
San Luis Obispo

**Sat., Dec. 17 • 5:00pm**  
Ras Danny  
Sea Pines Golf Resort  
1945 Solano St, Los Osos

**Sun., Dec. 18 • 11:00am**  
Brian Black  
Sea Pines Golf Resort  
1945 Solano St, Los Osos

**Sun., Dec. 18 • 5:30pm**  
Brilliant Brass  
Cass Winery  
7350 Linne Road,  
Paso Robles

**Sun., Dec. 18 • 7:30pm**  
Jane Lynch "A Swingin'  
Little Christmas"  
Performing Arts Center  
1 Grand Ave,  
San Luis Obispo

**Sun., Dec. 18 • 7:00pm**  
Jeff Elliott Jazz  
The Madonna Inn  
100 Madonna Road, San  
Luis Obispo

**Mon., Dec. 19 • 5:00pm**  
Dave Tate  
Rod & Hammer's SLO Stills  
855 Aerovista Pl,  
San Luis Obispo

**Tue., Dec. 20 • 6:30pm**  
Songwriters at Play hosts  
Song Contest  
Schooners  
171 N. Ocean Ave, Cayucos

**Wed., Dec. 21 • 7:00pm**  
Blues Agenda  
Merrimaker  
1301 2nd Street,  
Baywood Park

**Wed., Dec. 21 • 4:00pm**  
Toan Chau's Open Mic /  
Jam  
SLO Wine and Beer  
Company  
3536 S Higuera St Suite  
250, SLO

**Thu., Dec. 22 • 7:00pm**  
Emily Franklin  
Saints Barrel  
1021 Higuera St,  
San Luis Obispo

**Thu., Dec. 22 • 6:00pm**  
Hotel SLO: Dante Marsh  
Hotel SLO  
877 Palm Street,  
San Luis Obispo

**Fri., Dec. 23 • 7:00pm**  
Billy Foppiano  
SLO Cider Co.  
3419 Roberto Court,  
Suite C, SLO

**Fri., Dec. 23 • 6:00pm**  
Soundhhouse  
Liquid Gravity  
Brewing Company  
675 Clarion Ct,  
San Luis Obispo

**Sun., Dec. 25 • 7:00pm**  
Jeff Elliott Jazz  
The Madonna Inn  
100 Madonna Road,  
San Luis Obispo

**Wed., Dec. 28 • 4:00pm**  
Toan Chau's Open Mic /  
Jam  
SLO Wine and Beer Com-  
pany  
3536 S Higuera St  
Suite 250, SLO

Paul's Picks



SLO Symphony  
presents a  
Symphonic Rock  
Concert at the PAC



**R**ing in the New Year with Come Together, a pops concert created by Canadian-based symphonic rock group Jeans 'n Classics. They wowed audiences with Woodstock on the West Coast in 2019 for the Symphony's Avila Pops by the Sea. Bring your friends and your party hats to enjoy the music of The Beatles, Earth Wind and Fire, Elton John, Stevie Wonder, The Who, U2, A-ha, and more. This amazing show starts at 7:30, so plenty of time to ring in the new year at your second party.

Photo by Dean Sullivan

**Thu., Dec. 29 • 6:00pm**  
Hotel SLO: Dante Marsh  
Hotel SLO  
877 Palm Street,  
San Luis Obispo

**Fri., Dec. 30 • 7:30pm**  
La Marcha Sound (Latin  
Dance Party!)  
The Siren  
900 Main St, Morro Bay

**Sat., Dec. 31 • 8:00pm**  
The 3rd Annual NYE at  
The Rock:  
L'Eclair, TROPO,  
Moonshiner Collective,  
Mother Corn Shuckers  
SLO Brew Rock  
855 Aerovista Place,  
San Luis Obispo

**Sat., Dec. 31 • 6:00pm**  
'60s Rock and Roll New  
Year's Eve Bash:  
Unfinished Business  
Benefitting 17 Strong  
Foundation  
Camp Arroyo Grande  
250 Wesley St.,  
Arroyo Grande

**Sat., Dec. 31 • 8:00pm**  
Molly Ringwald Project 80's  
New Years Eve Bash!  
The Siren  
900 Main St, Morro Bay

**Sat., Dec. 31 • 7:30pm**  
SLO Symphony Pops  
Concert - Come Together  
Performing Arts Center  
1 Grand Ave,  
San Luis Obispo



### Morro Bay Maritime Museum

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Christmas Tree Lighting Before Storm Hits



The unusual heavy rains and winds that hit the area put a stop to a few holiday events this year, but the Community Tree Lighting, at the Red Barn in Los Osos was a success. Folks bundled up for caroling and snacks, as they decorated the Christmas Tree just in time before the storm rolled in.

The annual Lighted Boat Parade in Morro Bay, the

Christmas Parade in Los Osos and other events throughout the county were canceled, after being postponed in some cases. On social media people were disappointed about the washout, but generally agreed that water is a gift we needed.

Estero Bay News wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.



Light Up Los Osos Holiday Decoration Contest!

Sign up to enter the holiday decoration contest with the Los Osos/Baywood Park Chamber of commerce.

Please provide your contact information and we will add your address to our Contest Map! Judges will award prizes in multiple categories, and we are excited that you want to share your holiday decorations with the Los Osos / Baywood Park Community!

There is still time to enter your home or business in the LIGHT UP LOS OSOS decorating contest! A map with the entries will be available soon at <http://bit.ly/3WWSjw2>



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News

Car Giveaway From page 1

son crawling their way out of homelessness. Without it, they have difficulty getting employment even if the job is located not far from a bus line. If they cannot get to their job on time, every day they run the risk of losing that job. Employers may be understanding, but they also need their workers to be on the job. Bus transportation can be dicey here.

That’s what Kelley Welch ran into when she recently landed a great job as a preschool teacher at Grandmother’s House in San Luis Obispo. Welch, who is technically homeless but fortunate to be staying temporarily at a friend’s home, hoped the job would help her be able to get her own place to live.

Welch was awarded a 2008 white Pontiac Vibe on Thanksgiving Day at the Morro Bay Community Center by Lions Bill Todd, Ray McKelvey, President Chuck Stoll and Lions Club volunteers who had worked serving 800 Thanksgiving Day dinners that day. It is the 38th car the Morro Bay Lions Club has given away.

Welch was raised here in Los Osos from the time



Ray Mc Kelvey of the MB Lions hands the keys to the car to Kelley Welch as part of their Car Giveaway Program. Photo by Ruth Ann Angus

she was six years old. She attended Sunnyside Grammar School, Los Osos Middle School, and after some home schooling entered Cuesta College early. Taking courses in education she received her diploma qualifying her to teach preschool.

“I knew this was the career for me,” she said, “I love working with kids.”

She obtained employment at a local preschool and was still living with her mother at the time. Then misfortune

struck. In 2013 Welch’s mother’s trust fund went bankrupt, and they were eventually evicted from their rental home. Now homeless, she was offered a job as a nanny for a family relocating to Arizona. Her mother did not want to move out of state and ended up at the shelter in San Luis Obispo for nine months, eventually being placed by CAPSLO in a small apartment at Judson Terrace.

In 2016, Welch’s mother suddenly died.

“This was a tremendous shock for me,” Welch said, “I now had no living relative.”

After six years in Arizona, Welch wanted to return to the Central Coast. By this time, she had changed jobs and was working at a preschool in Phoenix. Then 2020 and the pandemic hit.

She moved, stayed with a friend and got work in elder care at a local nursing home as no preschools were open during the pandemic. When COVID restrictions eased she was offered the job with the preschool. Then the car a friend loaned her broke down and was not fixable.

Welch thought she could get around easily by bus but found out quickly that this was not the case. Trying to coordinate travel with two separate bus companies during a driver shortage, Welch often found herself unable to reach her job.

“Once I went to the bus stop and waited a long time. When the bus didn’t show up, I noticed a little paper sign on the pole there, it said this was no longer a bus stop.”

That’s when she heard about the Morro Bay Lions Club Car Giveaway Program, and she signed an application. “Without this car from the Lions,” she said, “it’s likely I would lose my job. And I love this job!”

Welch plans to volunteer with the Lions to help pay it forward for someone else and is saving up to rent her own place.

Top Dog From page 15

“After 30 years, Mom is still a labor and delivery nurse living in White Hall.” Her son followed her into the health care profession as a fireman, EMT, and paramedic with AMR (American Medical Response) until early 2022 when the universe prompted Patrick and Suzanne to post Top Dog was for sale.

Dustin wasn’t actively looking, but his lingering dream shared with his mother randomly directed him to check the marketplace. And there it was – his favorite coffee place was available. He talked to his husband, Timmie Florea, and called Patrick the next day to begin the meetings to lock in the sale and train to take over operations. It was the right time and the right opportunity for Dustin to follow his passion. It was the one and only offer Patrick and Suzanne considered. Patrick turned over the keys July 26, 2022.

Dustin knew he had not only purchased the shop and coffee roasting business, he intends to expand on the legacy Patrick and Suzanne created. For example, he and Timmie love their dogs and will continue to be a dog-friendly shop. They have two rescues at home. The subscription coffee program, Rescue Me Coffee Company, recently added Woods Humane Society for subscribers to select as the beneficiary of the percentage donation on sales [www.rescue-me-coffee.com](http://www.rescue-me-coffee.com) offers. Additionally, Top Dog Coffee added Woods’ Wiggle Waggle Fall Fundraiser to their com-

munity sponsorship program.

While waiting for orders at the coffee bar, patrons are introduced to a video produced by Patrick about New Life K9’s prison program. It was another one of those serendipitous happenings that became a passion when Patrick and Suzanne attended a K9 graduation program. New Life K9s offers a training program at California Men’s Colony where incarcerated men train service puppies for Veterans and first responders suffering from PTSD. Patrick was inspired to develop the concept for Rescue Me Coffee Company on his way home.

Since July, Dustin has set up his roasting warehouse intentionally adapting to Third Wave Roasting. This concept for roasters merges best practices for traditional roasting with innovations in new technology tools to perfect and replicate a roaster’s preferred recipes. Dustin will continue with Patrick’s talented broker to source worldwide certified sustainable farmers. Sustainable industry practices will be Dustin’s guideline and quest throughout his ownership tenure.

Will the menu change? Certainly, favorites will continue to be served, including the Top Dog Breakfast Burrito, Avocado Toast with Morro Creek Farms avocados, Lox Bagel, and Mad Max Grilled Cheese.

Dustin has always been in the service industry and in his own way will continue to serve his community. EMS

practitioners, law enforcement, military/veterans are offered a free ice coffee espresso and 50% off food items any day they visit.

“I would have appreciated a cup of coffee when I was on the job,” said Dustin.

Attendees of the Morro Bay Maritime Museum’s Family Fun Day in October sampled Top Dog’s tasty morning muffins in the Best of Blueberry muffin contest. Dustin also intends to become an active member with the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce. And each Saturday afternoon, Dustin supports the Community Market inviting locals and visitors to take a chance spinning Top Dog’s winners’ wheel for free samples instantly redeemable inside the shop.

Before Patrick “went fishing” he put the finishing touches on Top Dog’s garden. It’s always available for quiet time to conduct meetings or visit during breakfast or lunch. Dustin added heaters to ward off the afternoon chill. More entertainment was added in the fall, which will begin again in February. The Central Coast Comedy Club will be back and the popular ReBoot continues between March and October.

Who knew that college kid that regularly enjoyed coffee after surfing Morro Rock would one day be ready to buy Patrick and Suzanne’s coffee business when Patrick and Suzanne were ready to “go fishing” in Idaho?

The universe alerted them to their gift, and each said yes and were twice blessed to reconnect.

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Ted Emrick with the original drawing, from 20 years ago, that details his vision for the outdoor art gallery. Photo by Theresa-Marie Wilson

community and being invested in the community.”

After about four decades surviving and thriving in the art world with shows in galleries in Aspen, Santa Fe, Los Olivos, San Francisco, Hawaii and well-known patrons including Apple, Caesar’s Palace, Allegretto Vineyard Resort, and a number of other high-end hotels, COVID hit, closing many galleries in the height of the pandemic.

“I was thinking about retiring at the beginning of the year,” Ted, 64, said. “I thought ‘that was a good 40 year run,’ and, I got really depressed. I just knew, I’m supposed to be doing this.”

About six months ago, after the passing of his mother, Ted began to pursue the dream that had been in his mind

and on paper for so many years. He purchased the property, gave his daughter, Sierra, half of the site to build her first home on and then embarked on his new “creative adventure.”

“I’ve always envisioned this to be a place to show my and other artists’ work,” Ted said.

It is hard to miss Ted’s first contribution to the future art space— an arch with a redwood door with a 7-foot diameter glass piece that features seashells, starfish and ocean designs done through a process called slumping. The technic uses molds, heat, and gravity, to form glass into shapes and take on various textures.

In the works is are driftwood dividers, a fence and a low stucco wall with decorative tiles that will surround the property with a few additional niches featuring Ted’s smaller doors opening to the sculpture garden that will grow inside showcasing multiple artists.

“Even the wall and fence has to be a creative adventure,” Ted said.

Future plans include tours given by artists, art walks with students, and becoming part of the SLO County Art Council’s Open Studios event.

“We might have events here, or lectures or just keeping people invested and involved in the arts,” Ted said.

Hopefully that interest will lead to sells as well. The sculpture garden will be a working one with pieces available for purchase.

“Everything is for sell,” Ted said. “As an artist, to survive, you can’t be attached. You just make pieces with as much love and consciousness as you can, and then that’s made to go away. I’m going to be creating art my entire life. So this is just the way we have fun. If I can sell a piece, I’m successful, and if I can inspire someone, even more.”

All the galleries and accolades in the art world aside, Emrick said most of his gratification surrounds “being able to survive as an artists and to show my daughter and my students that this can happen. I was a professional artist, and I am noted for that. It’s really interesting, but at this point (in life), what I’m most proud of is being part of a community as this working artists and how I fit into the matrix as part



The door built by Ted Emrick is the focal point of an art project developing on 5th and El Morro streets in Los Osos. Photo by Paul Irving

of what makes it special.”

Ted holds three degrees in art: one in two-dimensional art, another in three-dimensional art and a BFA from San Francisco’s Art Institute. He was recognized as Alumni of the Year by Cuesta College in 2017, an achievement that meant a lot to him on many levels.

“I struggled through school; I’m dyslexic,” he said. “This is kind of like my vocabulary. This is how I write stories.”

To see more of Emrick’s work in person, check out Harmony Glassworks in Harmony or go to his website at [www.tedleemrick.com](http://www.tedleemrick.com).



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News

**Vet's Hall** From page 1

County Supervisors “recognized the importance of this project to the region as a whole,” Diodati said. “We had so many dead ends and low points thrown at us, but we never stopped working.”

Greg Bettencourt, who is among the leaders in a community effort to raise money to support the project, pointed out several in the audience “who are doers,” including, he said, those who work behind the scenes at the County.

He noted that the group, Restore Cayucos Vet's Hall Committee, had raised money for the construction and was continuing to raise money for new furnishings, as the \$11 million repair bill doesn't include new furnishings.

The Committee began fund money in October 2021 and in the last year raised over \$500,000 for the project from well over 500 people and organizations. The committee pledged \$435,000 to SLO County to be used for construction. Bettencourt said they want to raise another \$200,000 for furnishings, to replace what's been in storage for the past 6 years.

Putting together all the funding must have been an enormous challenge, even with a project that everyone wants to see done.

The County had \$5.95M in hand for the project when the bids came in last May, including \$471,600 from the general fund, \$1.93M of State aid, and \$3.55M of “internal bridge loans from the Tax Reduction Reserve Fund, according to the report. The total project cost is now estimated at more than \$11M, which meant the County needed to find another \$5 million.

The various funding sources include: \$4.43M from the California Resources Agency; \$345,000 from the State Coastal Conservancy; and \$705,000 from State Parks.

The project is also relying on \$471,000 from the County general fund; \$1M from the State Veterans Affairs budget; \$60,000 from the Cayucos tourism board funds; \$50,000 from Dist. 2 Community Donations Fund; and \$3.53M in bond financing

Originally built as a warehouse for the old Cayucos



This historic drawing shows the old Cayucos Landing warehouse during the horse and buggy days.

Landing by Capt. James Cass in 1873, the building has been used as a vet's hall and community gathering and events space since the 1950s.

It has hosted countless wedding receptions, community meetings, and special events like the Annual Sea Glass Festival, the Portuguese I.D.E.S. Festival, and 4th of July Events.

But an inspection in 2016 that discovered extensive rotting to the floor under the hall's stage, and walls that were no longer connected to the roof beams, forced its closure to the public over fears the roof could collapse or blow off in bad weather.

Though that hasn't happened in the intervening years, once such a declaration is made on a public building, it really can't be used again until it's fixed. And fixing a historic structure like this, takes time and a lot of money.

The County went out for bids last March and in May opened two bids from JG Contracting of Nipomo for \$9.5 million, with a higher bid coming in from Edwards Construction Group, Inc., from Santa Maria at over \$9.6M.

The County did some shuffling with the scope of work and brought the low bid down to \$8.56 million but a few more changes, in particular to roofing materials, and the final contract award was for \$9.41M.

Funding the project has been a long and winding road. “At time of bid,” the County report said, “the project had a budgeted of \$4.5 million for the construction contract, so awarding a contract in the amount of \$8,560,000 was not feasible. Since that time, staff has worked to secure additional project funding from various sources to augment the project budget sufficiently to be able to move forward with award of the construction contract.”

The project plans are to “raise the building's foundation 2.5-feet above its current level to protect it against sea level rise, secure the structural integrity of the building, restore its historic fabric, enhance coastal access with ADA-compliant connections between the facility, the beach, and the pier, and most importantly restore this important cultural and economic resource to the community and the region,” said a County report.

It's expected to take about 2 years to complete but when it's done, Cayucos will be well positioned well into the future, in so far as its iconic structures are concerned.

The Cayucos Pier also underwent an complete rebuild several years ago, after an inspection noted it had lost many pilings, while others were no longer connected to the deck, which itself was in rough shape.

Indeed, the Cayucos Pier, before being rebuilt was a regular “Galloping Gurtie” of sorts, swaying back and forth in heavy seas or when lots of people were on it, like during the Annual Polar Bear Dip and the Lost at Sea Memorial Day Ceremony.

It too was closed for some time before money was pulled together to restore it. The Pier was originally built by Capt. Cass at about the same time as the Vet's Hall.

Now the pier stands fully restored and likely to last another 75-100 years, with its sister structure the Vet's Hall due to be the same.

Studio Design Group, Inc., was chosen to do the design work and its renderings closely resemble what the Vet's Hall originally looked like in the horse and buggy days when it was first built.

If readers would like to contribute to the Restore Cayucos Vet's Hall Committee, see the website at: [www.restorecayucosvetshall.org](http://www.restorecayucosvetshall.org). Donations are tax deductible.

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

KEVIN O'CONNOR, President



Wind Farm From page 1

five lease sites cover a total of 373,268 acres.

Each company is expected to install 1 gigawatt of wind turbine capacity and the so-called Morro Bay Wind Area, a nearly 400-square mile patch of ocean some 20-30 miles offshore, would have 3 GW.

A California First

The five lease sites off California were the first such offshore wind energy leases that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has ever done off the West Coast.

It's the third offshore lease sale BOEM has held this year. The West Coast sales totaled \$757.1 million, according to BOEM. An earlier sale off the Coast of New England brought in over \$4.5 billion.

President Joe Biden has called for building 30 GW of offshore wind energy capacity (stationary turbines), by 2030; and 15 GW of floating offshore wind power by 2035.

Assuming the West Coast wind farms are built, the five leases sold last week potentially total 4.6 GW, enough to power about 1.5 million homes, according to BOEM.

Inching Toward Climate Goals

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, who oversees BOEM said, "The Biden-Harris Administration believes that to address the climate crisis head on, we must unleash a new era of clean, reliable energy that serves every household in America. Today's lease sale is further proof that industry momentum — including for floating offshore wind development — is undeniable.

"A sustainable, clean energy future," Haaland continued, "is within our grasp and the Interior Department is doing everything we can to ensure that American communities nationwide benefit."

Who Are These People?

All three of the winning bidders here are major players in the renewable energy game, with one company being owned by a foreign country, though a friendly one to the U.S.

Equinor ASA (formerly called Statoil and StatoilHydro) is a Norwegian state-owned, multinational energy company headquartered in Stavanger, Norway.

It is primarily a petroleum company, operating in 36 countries and one of numerous oil companies that formed LLCs to go after the offshore wind leases. See: www.equinor.com for more on the company.

Molly Morris, President of Equinor Wind US said in a news release, "We are delighted to get the opportunity to explore the potential for producing even more renewable energy for the U.S., this time in the Pacific Ocean.

"The U.S. West Coast is one of the most attractive growth regions for floating offshore wind in the world due to its favorable wind conditions and proximity to markets that need reliable, clean energy."

Offshore wind on the West Coast could help achieve the state's clean energy goals, bolster renewable energy sources, and create new jobs and investments in California. The U.S. is a key market for Equinor's offshore wind activities and one where we aspire to be a leader in growing this new energy industry."

According to its website, see: www.offshorewindca.org, "Offshore Wind California is a coalition of industry partners with a shared interest in promoting policies and public support for responsible development of offshore wind power in California."

And somewhat surprisingly, Offshore Wind California is a non-profit, 501(c)(6) organization.

Adam Stern, the Executive Director for Offshore Wind California, said, "Today's final auction results are great news for California's offshore wind industry, workers, and electricity ratepayers. This is the most consequential milestone yet for the Golden State's efforts to make offshore wind a key part of its diverse clean energy future, and meet its ambitious planning goals to generate up to 5 GW by 2030 and a nation-leading 25 GW by 2045." See: www.offshorewindca.org for more on the company.

Invenergy California Offshore LLC, according to its website (see invenergy.com), is a subsidiary of Invenergy, "a leading privately-held developer, owner, and operator of sustainable energy solutions."

"Invenergy," the company said, "and its affiliated companies develop, own, and operate large-scale renewable and other clean energy generation and storage facilities in the Americas, Europe and Asia. Invenergy's home office is located in Chicago, and it has regional development offices in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Spain, Japan, Poland, and Scotland."

Joshua Weinstein, the Vice President and Head of Offshore Development at Invenergy, said, "We are thrilled to be a provisional winner in BOEM's first offshore wind lease sale on the West Coast. We will bring Invenergy's two decades of development experience to this project, working in close collaboration with coastal communities and stakeholders to build on our community investment track record to deliver clean, reliable energy to California."

Invenergy has some built 190 energy projects totaling some 30,100 megawatts. The portfolio includes some 110-wind energy projects totaling 17,600 MW.

Sales Not Yet Final

Final sale prices are actually not yet set, as the government has included several allowances and incentives to bidders to get discounts off their bids.

Speaking on the credits, BOEM Director, Amanda Lefton said, "The innovative bidding credits in the California auction will result in tangible investments for the floating offshore wind workforce and supply chain in the United States, and benefits to Tribes, communities, and ocean users potentially affected by future offshore wind activities.

"This auction commits substantial investment to support economic growth from floating offshore wind energy development — including the jobs that come with it.

"These credits and additional lease stipulations demonstrate BOEM's commitment to responsibly grow the offshore wind industry to achieve our offshore wind goals."

According to BOEM's news release announcing the sales, "The auction also included 5% credits for bidders who committed to entering community benefit agreements [CBAs]. The first type of agreement is a Lease Area Use CBA with communities, stakeholder groups, or Tribal entities whose use of the lease areas or use of the resources harvested from the lease areas is expected to be impacted by offshore wind development. "

City-Castle Agreement Moot

Ironically, Castle Wind (now called Trident Wind) CEO Alla Weinstein hatched the idea of floating wind farms in 2016, when she approached BOEM, the State Energy Commission and City of Morro Bay about leasing the ocean and using facilities at the power plant.

The City and Trident Wind had reached a preliminary understanding with the City of Morro Bay and had also reached an agreement with the Morro Bay and Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Organizations just this past Oct. 19, forming something called "Morro Bay Lease Area Mutual Benefits Corp. It would appear to have been exactly what BOEM wanted.

"The second type of agreement," according to BOEM, "is a General CBA with communities, Tribes, or stakeholder groups that are expected to be affected by the potential impacts on the marine, coastal or human environment from lease development."

Engaging with the local community is important in this process. "Under stipulations in the leases, lessees are required to engage with Tribes, ocean users, and local communities that may be affected by their lease activities. Lessee engagement must allow for early and active information sharing, focused discussion of potential issues, and collaborative identification of solutions. These communication and engagement activities must be routinely reported to BOEM."

The government actually expects all the ocean users to get along. "These lease stipulations are intended to promote offshore wind energy development in a way that coexists with other ocean uses," BOEM said, "addresses potential impacts and benefits, and protects the ocean environment, while also facilitating our nation's energy future for generations to come."

Long Ways to Go

Readers shouldn't think huge wind turbines are going to be installed anytime soon, some experts believe it will be

6-7 years to get done. In 2016, Weinstein had predicted it could take 10 years.

The new leaseholders must now develop a conceptual project and do full environmental impact studies, and go through a permitting process. It's unclear at this point what the permitting process will be under California's rather stiff environmental laws. At some point, it'll have to come to the Coastal Commission, once the transmission lines cross into State Waters. And Morro Bay will also have something to say about it, when the cables want to come ashore.

Onshore Facilities Needed

The companies will also need to find someplace to build a maintenance and assembly yard, which a Cal Poly study said needed to be about 40 acres, and adjacent to a deep water port.

Such a place currently doesn't exist in SLO County and the likely place it will be built is Port Hueneme in Ventura County. Morro Bay Harbor could probably accommodate workboats and crews, as well as control room facilities.

Indeed, the Harbor Department recently got a big grant intended to upgrade the North T-pier to meet the needs of these wind companies, the details of which have not been worked out with these new companies.

The companies, if they bring their cables ashore through the power plant's outfall canal, will have to lease the use of that structure, which is a State Tidelands Trust property.

Duke Energy, which unsuccessfully tried to replace the power plant, had agreed to pay the Harbor Department \$250,000 a year for that lease, which only lasted a few years before Duke gave up on California and sold its four plants and fled the Golden State.

The companies will also have to develop manufacturing plants, and a reliable supply chain, as many of the materials needed for these wind turbines — from steel for moorings and towers, to composites for fan blades, and components for the electronics — come from overseas.



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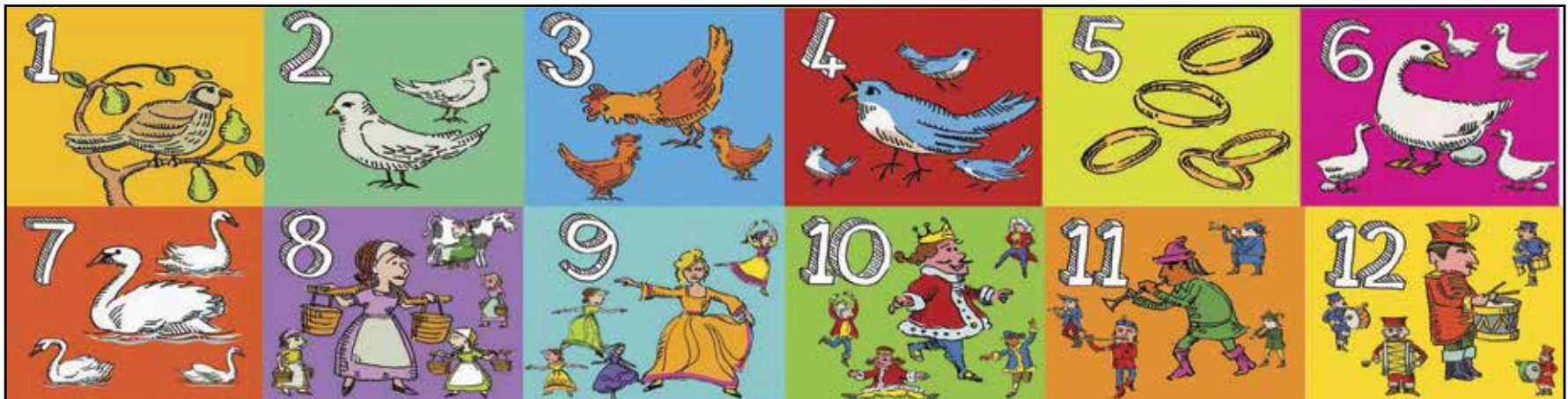


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