

## New Harbor Patrol Boat Christened



Standing on the bow of the new patrol boat are Harbor Director Ted Schiafone (left) and Mayor Carla Wixom, as they cut the ribbon christening the new boat.

Story and photos by Neil Farrell

It's been nearly 3 years but the Morro Bay Harbor Patrol finally got its new-used patrol boat into service.

At a ceremony Feb. 20 on the North T-pier harbor, City officials and the boating public gathered to officially celebrate the patrol's new emergency rescue boat.

Harbor Patrol Chief Becka Kelly emceed the event and took the occasion to thank the Friends of the Harbor Department's President Bill Luffee for his group's work raising more than \$100,000 to pay for new diesel engines for the new patrol boat, which underwent a full repowering from the original platform the City bought used from the Port San Luis Harbor District.

The 26-foot Radon Craft was bought using a state grant for \$85,000 in December 2020. She replaces another Radon Craft patrol boat that the department bought brand new in 1984 — named Boat 68 — and that has been the workhorse of the department's fleet all these years.

In 2012, Boat 68 was on a rescue mission when she took a nasty wave that delaminated the hull's fiberglass, tore away a big hunk of the bottom and she started taking on water during a rescue mission to Montana de Oro.

She didn't sink and was eventually repaired but the old girl had seen better days, and the department started planning to replace it.

But putting together the money for a new boat that could cost upwards of \$400,000 or more, takes time and a little help from one's friends. But the Department of Boating and Waterways denied the City's request for a grant to buy a new boat, which meant looking for alternatives.

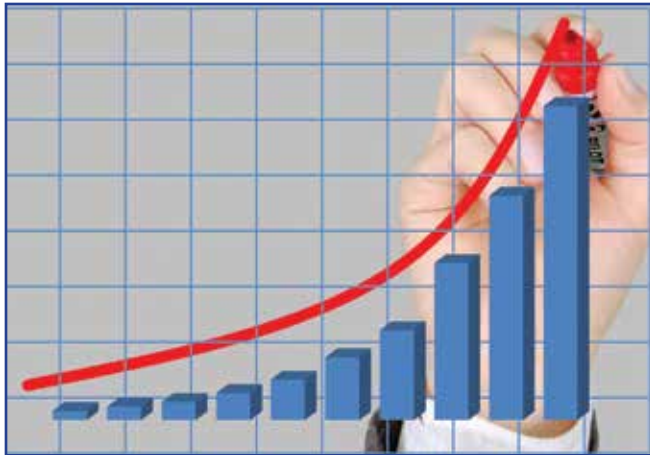
And when the opportunity to buy PSL's old boat came up, the City jumped on it, garnering a DBW grant, albeit much smaller, to buy the boat.

Luffee told the crowd that he started the Friends when he was on the Harbor Advisory Board and learned how woefully underfunded the Harbor department is on things like essential equipment.

Kelly took the opportunity to also welcome the City's new Harbor Director, Ted Schiafone, who replaces the now-retired Eric Endersby. Schiafone started work Feb. 14 and comes to Morro Bay from Oceanside, Calif., down in San Diego County. He was the division manager for the City of Oceanside Harbor District, managing a budget of over \$9 million.

Boat Christened Continued on page 8

## Garbage Rates Set to Jump



By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors have set a March 21 hearing date on proposed garbage rate hikes in the unincorporated towns of San Luis Obispo County, with Los Osos garbage customers alone looking at a more than 41% increase.

But if you think new Los Osos rates are high, it's nearly double that for other areas of the County.

Mission Country Disposal "submitted a request to the County of San Luis Obispo for a base year rate increase of 41.87% for solid waste disposal collection services provided within the Los Osos Community Services District and surrounding areas," reads a staff report by Mladen Bandov, the County's Solid Waste Division Manager.

The requested increase consists of:

- Capital investments of new collection vehicles, replacement containers and additional containers to meet the demands of Senate Bill (SB) 1383 compliance;
- Capital equipment investments and escalating operating expenses related to the HZI anaerobic digester facility;
- Market rate wage adjustment to attract and retain quality employees;
- Increased costs of insurance premiums;
- Increased costs of gas and oil; and
- Other costs including increases to commingle processing fees, landfill disposal, truck repairs, other outside services, franchise fees, and consumer price index.

The increase will also restore an agreed upon 7% allowable profit margin for garbage contractors.

**LOCSD Gets Back Garbage Franchise**

The LOCSD has its own franchise agreement with

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## Moving Forward: David J. Rogers Art Gallery Finds a Home



Joe and Peggy Rogers with River and David J. Rogers of the family-owned art gallery in Morro Bay.

By Judy Salamacha

The first time I walked into the David J. Rogers Gallery was during a Shop-Sip-Stroll event last spring coordinated by the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce. I spied my friends from Kelsey Winery pouring

some of my favorite wines. While sipping, I was drawn to Rogers' vivid watercolors. They feature recognizable Central Coast locations that made me feel, "Yes! I live in paradise!"

However, it was his print of a black lab howling at the moon that won my soul.

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## Watkins Named New Morro Bay Police Chief



Morro Bay has a new police chief, as the soon-to-be-departing city manager has hired the former police commander to be the new full time police chief.

City Manager Scott Collins announced Feb. 16 that he had appointed Interim Chief Amy Watkins to replace retired Police Chief Jody Cox. Chief Watkins had been the department's commander since coming to Morro Bay from Visalia in 2019. She'd been the interim chief since Cox' retirement at the end of December.

Collins' announcement said Watkins "Helped lead the Department through an expansion of programs connecting the department and the community, including launching

Police Chief Continued on page 19

## County Parks Got Hit Hard

By Neil Farrell

The Jan. 8-9 storm that caused so much destruction to neighborhoods on the North Coast, could cost the County Parks Department nearly \$2.5 million in repairs to several facilities.

County Parks and Recreation Director, Tanya Richardson's Feb. 7 report to County Supervisors identified three main parks facilities that were damaged in the storms that began with an atmospheric river on Dec. 27.

The report said Supervisors in January had approved a short list of emergency repairs that had to be made — rec-

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## Supervisors Turn Down Raise

County Supervisors recently did something almost unheard of — they voted against giving themselves a raise. On a 3-2 vote — Supervisors Bruce Gibson and Dawn Ortiz-Legg voted for the increase and Supervisors John Peschong and Debbie Arnold voted against it; which left newly elected Dist. 4 Supervisor, Jimmy Paulding, to cast the tiebreaker vote against the raise.

Paulding reportedly said as he was just elected last year, he didn't think it would be a good thing to vote himself a pay raise as one of the first actions he took.

According to County Human Resources Director, Tami Douglas-Schatz' staff report supervisors' pay was increased by ordinance in May 2021, increasing the annual pay from \$86,000 to over \$90,000. The ordinance also set a future compensation trigger, "It is intended that the annual salary of members of the board of supervisors be a minimum of twenty-five percent above the annual salary of the legislative assistant classification."

Setting Supervisor pay also entails a comparison of the compensation supervisors in other counties make — so-called "prevailing wage."

Douglas-Schatz said supervisors' pay right now is only 5.4% higher than what their assistants make

"It is best practice," Douglas-Schatz said, "for supervisors to be paid more than the employees they supervise and department heads typically make 20% to 30% more than their assistants or deputy directors. While the Board of Supervisors are not department heads and do not have deputy directors, a similar alignment should exist between Board members and their subordinate legislative assistants, as is contemplated in the current ordinance code provision."

In a comparison of other supervisors' pay from other counties, SLO County's Supervisors "are paid about 22% below the market median."

Douglas-Schatz' report said that in order to bring SLO County's supervisors' pay up to where it ought to be, they would need to get a series of increases spaced out over the next 18 months or so. In the end she proposed the new salaries would end up at \$109,000 a year.

From there, the Supervisors pay increases would have become automatic if their assistants got raises through the normal employee union negotiations, though they are not in the actual union.

If the raises had been approved, it would have cost the taxpayers and additional \$142,000 a year once the salaries topped out.

## No-BESS Group Getting Organized



By Neil Farrell

Opposition is growing to a proposal to build a giant battery storage facility in Morro Bay, with a local group of citizens getting organized and ready to fight the project. A meeting was recently held for the group calling itself, "Citizens for Estero Bay Coastal Preservation," with mostly curious residents turning out to talk about strategy and organizing opposition to the battery facility.

Vistra Energy, which owns the Morro Bay Power Plant property, has proposed building a 600-megawatt lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage System or BESS on a 22-acre portion of the waterfront property.

At 600 MW, it would be the largest such plant in the world. Vistra already has a 300 MW BESS at its Moss Landing Power Plant.

In a Power Point slide show, the Citizens' group listed a goal of making the council "follow the will of the people," focusing on the recently adopted General Plan as the "Constitution" of the City and how opposition to changing the General Plan so soon after being adopted by the Coastal Commission as one avenue to fight the BESS.

The group is exploring placing a voter initiative on the ballot that would lock in the power plant property's current zoning — commercial visitor serving — for they believe that if the zoning isn't changed, that would effectively kill the project.

The BESS project is currently undergoing environmental review by a consultant, hired by the City and being paid for by Vistra. A draft EIR was to be released in early 2023 but now it appears won't be released until sometime near the end of 2023.

The group's Power Point also discusses briefly a report by the "Regional Economic Action Coalition" or REACH, which looked into the economics of offshore wind farms and Vandenberg Space Force base and its future in the burgeoning space industry.

That REACH report discusses what will be needed in terms of onshore facilities to support both the manufacturing and assembly of floating wind turbines, and the port facilities that will be needed to support the maintenance workers and 200-foot crew vessels.

Though not dealing directly with the BESS, the Citizen's group looked at the REACH report as the kind of work that is being done behind the scenes to bring the various industrial energy facilities into fruition and maximize the economic benefits of these new industries (See: reachcentralcoast.org).

If readers would like more information on the work of the Citizen's for Estero Bay Coastal Preservation, see the website at: [www.nomorrobaybess.com](http://www.nomorrobaybess.com) or email to: [no.mb.bess@gmail.com](mailto:no.mb.bess@gmail.com) to order a yard sign and join their notifications list.

## County Environmental Health to Enforce No-Free Spork Law



By Neil Farrell

The County has designated an enforcement agency for a State Law banning restaurants from giving out chopsticks and other throwaway eating utensils. County Supervisors designated the Public Health Department's Environmental Health Services Division as the enforcement agency for Assembly Bill 1276, the so-called "Single-Use Foodware Accessories and Condiments" law that Gov. Gavin Newsom signed in October 2021. In a state becoming known for dipping into the minutia of regulations, AB 1276 is a doozy. "AB 1276," reads a County report, "restricts restaurants and other food facilities from providing single-use

foodware accessories and condiments, such as utensils, straws, stirrers, and condiment cups and packets, unless requested by a consumer. The new requirements are intended to reduce the amount of waste generated from single-use items common in the retail food industry."

According to an AB 1276 Fact Sheet, "Single-use foodware accessory" means all of the following single-use items provided alongside ready-to-eat food:

- Utensils, which is defined as forks, knives, spoons, and sporks;
- Chopsticks;
- Condiment cups and packets;
- Straws;
- Stirrers;
- Splash sticks; and,
- Cocktail sticks.

"Standard condiment" refers to "relishes, spices, sauces, confections, or seasoning that require no additional preparation and that are usually used on a food item after preparation, including ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, soy sauce, hot sauce, salsa, salt & pepper, sugar, and sugar substitutes."

It isn't an out-right ban on stuff that helps make some foods more palatable, as restaurants can still provide these items upon request.

Requirements include only providing single-use accessories required to eat the ready-to-eat food; no "bundling" of single-use accessories or condiments; and restaurants can only offer those single-use items "needed to eat or prevent spillage of the ready-to-eat food at a drive-through as well as in a public use airport."

And if you like your meals delivered, the delivery companies can give these items if you ask for them and restaurants that work with delivery services must "customize their menu with a list of available single-use accessories or condiment. Only those items chosen by the consumer will be delivered. If no single-use accessories or condiments are requested none will be provided."

And of course these items are OK to be provided if they are "self-serve," such as a soda machine with lids and straws, and plastic knives, spoons, forks and sporks that don't come pre-packaged.

The County chose EHS to be the plastic fork police because they already do restaurant inspections and thus have an existing working relationship with eateries.

Like other such laws, it will be enforced on a complaint basis. "EHS intends to respond to complaints within the County unincorporated area," the report said, "by send-



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News

ing a letter notifying a retail food facility operator of the AB 1276 requirements. The letter will indicate that any subsequent follow up visits may result in an inspection fee equivalent to EHS’ hourly rate to recover costs of verifying compliance. The fee will not be issued if a complaint is not justified.”

The law doesn’t apply to all eateries. Jails, licensed health care facilities, residential care facilities and public and private school cafeterias are exempt.

Storm Drain Fails on Embarcadero

By Neil Farrell

A storm drain running under the Embarcadero failed, causing a depression in the roadway and the City of Morro Bay to conduct emergency repairs.

According to the City, the drain is located north of Beach Street and runs underneath the roadway, emptying into the bay.

“The Public Works Department hired a contractor to expose the area around the storm drain,” City Engineer Eric Riddiough said, “and has identified a failure of the storm drain line extending to both sides of Embarcadero Road.”

The City detoured traffic around the damage site, moving the cars into parking lots on either side of the roadway, as the repairs were being done. It was expected to take a couple of days to finish.

The drain is part of an extensive storm drainage system that runs throughout town and does a pretty good job of channeling normal rain runoff from the streets.

The elevation difference between the waterfront and uptown area is pretty steep, and rain runoff can be heavy and move swiftly downhill. There are more than 30 storm drains scattered along the Embarcadero business area that empty directly into the bay. Generally, rain falling on the southern end of town including the Downtown and Heights, enter storm drains and flow down to the bay.

Maintaining all the storm drains, even just clearing them before winter, is a huge job and one the City had been falling behind on. So in 2006, voters approved Measure Q, a half-cent local sales tax that was promised to be spent on unfunded police and fire department needs; street repairs; and storm drain maintenance.

In December 2021, Assistant City Mgr., Sarah Johnson-Rios, issued a so-called AB 1600 Report, a State Law that requires cities to report the collection of impact fees and how they are spent. Included in that was an assessment on potential future projects paid for with “impact fees,” of which the City has several types.

The chart lists five “Under funded or unfunded storm

drain projects” totaling over \$5.22 million and none of them were on the Embarcadero.

In the latest AB 1600 Report the City listed two storm drain projects — emergency repairs to drains on Sequoia Street and at Juniper and Elena, for a total of \$203,000.

Storm drain failures can cause huge problems, for example in the March 10, 1995 mega storm, a storm drain vault — where several pipes empty into — in the 200 block of Main Street overflowed, causing a break in a storm drain leading down to the bay and what was at the time a fuel dock.

When the storm drain failed, it shifted the bluff, which broke a fire water main that fed hydrants on the fuel dock and blew out a huge chunk of the bluff, including some of the road leading down to the docks.

City Council to Hire Interim City Manager



Greg Carpenter

By Neil Farrell

A veteran city administrator will step temporarily into the top job in Morro Bay, as the City Council begins the search for a permanent city manager.

City Manager Scott Collins, who is slated to leave the City for a new job on March 3, announced the hiring of Greg Carpenter as the interim city manager. Collins leaves to become the executive director of the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo.

Carpenter will step in on March 1, provided his contract is approved at the Feb. 28 City Council meeting. But if

the Mayor’s statement is any indication, that would seem to be a formality.

“We are thankful,” Mayor Carla Wixom said, “that Mr. Carpenter will be able to serve the community as interim city manager, while we work with a recruiter to search for the next city manager. I believe Mr. Carpenter will be a good fit for the interim position, as he understands our region and has previously served as a city manager for a Coastal California community.”

Carpenter, who last served as interim city manager in Paso Robles, looks forward to this challenge. “I appreciate the opportunity to serve during this interim period while the City Council selects the next permanent city manager for Morro Bay,” Carpenter said. “I’m looking forward to working with the Council, City staff, and the community to continue the projects and efforts that are underway, and set the stage for a smooth transition for the new city manager.”

He said his door will be open. “Please feel free to reach out and contact me with any comments, concerns, or questions,” Carpenter said. “I look forward to hearing from you.”

Carpenter is a local government veteran. Carpenter “brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the City of Morro Bay,” Collins said, “having served as a city manager and director of Planning and Building Safety for the City of El Segundo. Prior to that, he served as zoning administrator and planning bureau manager for the City of Long Beach. Most recently, he served as the interim city manager for Paso Robles.”

Carpenter earned a Bachelor of Arts in geography and a Master’s Degree of Public Administration from CSU Long Beach.

Carpenter’s hiring is the first step in a process the City Council has embarked upon. Mayor Wixom previously said they had hired a search company, Mosaic, to conduct the recruitment and help them narrow down what could be a large number of applicants. The City Council will make the final decision on who is hired as the next full time city manager. Carpenter’s tenure could last several months depending on how the recruitment goes.

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# Cold Case Detective Retiring



Sheriff's Det. Clint Cole is retiring after 32 years with the County Sheriff's Department. Photo submitted

The Sheriff's Detective who helped deliver justice for a missing Cal Poly freshman after some 26 years, is retiring, the Sheriff's Office announced.

Sheriff's Det. Clint Cole will retire after 32 years with the department. His last day on the job is slated to be March 10.

That's also the day that Paul Flores, who was recently convicted of murdering Kristen Smart, is scheduled for sentencing. Smart, the Cal Poly freshman who disappeared after an off-campus party in May 1996, has never been found.

"Detective Cole," reads a news release from the Sheriff's Department, "became the lead investigator in the Smart Case in 1919 and is credited with leading that investigation to a successful conclusion with the arrest of Flores on April 13, 2021 and his conviction on Oct. 18, 2022."

It should be noted that Paul Flores' father, Ruben Flores, was acquitted of conspiracy after the fact in helping his son hide Smart's body. The two were tried together, though each had their own defense attorney and individual juries for the two cases. The trials of Paul and Ruben Flores were moved to Monterey County Superior Court in Salinas due to pretrial publicity and extensive media coverage, which spanned over 25 years.

The Sheriff was complimentary of the detective that cleared the books on one of the County's most enigmatic cases. "I am extremely proud of the work Clint has done for this agency," Sheriff Ian Parkinson said, "especially with regard to the Kristin Smart investigation. He has accomplished much in his 32-year career, and his retirement is well deserved."

Cole started with the Sheriff's Department as a Correctional deputy in 1990 and moved to Patrol in 1996. He was a School Resource Deputy from 2002 to 2014, the release said, as part of the Sheriff's Special Operations Unit.

He was promoted to senior deputy in 2014 and in 2017 was "selected to be the first investigator assigned to the newly created position of Cold Case/Unsolved Homicide Detective."

He got the Kristen Smart case in 2019 and led the reinvigorated efforts to solve that nagging mystery. Paul Flores has always been the one and only suspect in Smart's disappearance.

"It is very satisfying to see Paul Flores convicted for the murder of Kristin Smart," Det. Cole said. "I hope I've been able to give the Smart Family some measure of justice for Kristin."

Det. Cole is credited with also solving three other high-profile homicides in SLO County — the 41-year-old murder cases of Jane Antunez and Patricia Dwyer in Atascadero; and assisting with the 2018 murder investigation of Nancy Woodrum in Paso Robles.

Cole credited his family, wife Kay and daughter, Audra, and his father John "for all their support during the long hours he worked on cases." As for retirement plans, for right now he just plans "to relax" and spend more time with his family.

# Seats Open on Diablo Decommissioning Panel



Pacific Gas & Electric is asking for applications from the greater community to fill some seats on the public panel that is working on the Diablo Canyon Power Plant's decommissioning.

The panel is the company's liaison with the public on the monumental work ahead in closing California's last working nuclear power plant, a process that's expected to take many years and cost several billion dollars.

The announcement comes as PG&E is also working with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on relicensing the plant, so it can run for 5-10 more years after its last license expires in Fall 2025.

"PG&E," reads a news release by spokeswoman Carina Corral, "is continuing to plan for decommissioning the plant, while at the same time pursuing license renewal following State legislation that seeks to extend operations at DCPD to ensure electric reliability for all Californians."

Last year, the Governor and State Legislature, which have been pursuing so-called green energy sources — mainly solar and wind farms — to push the State towards its ambitious goals in fighting climate change, voted to request that PG&E try to keep the plant open past 2025.

Solar and wind by their nature are unreliable to meet electricity demand and require huge storage facilities to match up demand with supply.

The thought is to keep Diablo Canyon, which produces about 9% of the overall power used by Californians, operating for a while longer to give storage and generation projects time to get built and go on line.

The panel, which started in 2018, works on planning for the 12,000-acre plant property's future. Already, PG&E has placed some 1,200 acres into a conservation easement. That easement property includes the historic Port San Luis Lighthouse. Diablo Canyon property spans some 14-miles of coastline.

PG&E said there are several panel positions up for appointment or reappointment and the application period ends March 7.

Anyone interested in serving on the panel can go to: [diablocanyonpanel.org](http://diablocanyonpanel.org) or [pge.com/engagementpanel](http://pge.com/engagementpanel) for applications.

"Current panel members not seeking reappointment," Corral said, "including one PG&E representative, will select candidates who broadly reflect the diverse stakeholder viewpoints in proximity to DCPD."

Among the issues the panel is holding hearings on is the future uses for the large property which features a variety of environments — from oak woodlands, to grasslands, coastal hills, terraces and bluffs, and rugged coastline with numerous offshore rocks. The property, which abuts Montaña de Oro State Park to the north, was also once home to many Native Americans over millennia. Their ancestors have requested the property be returned to them.

Public meetings occur regularly throughout the year,

and are open to the public.

As for eligibility requirements, they must be "consistent with the Panel's Charter," Corral said, "elected officials, current PG&E employees and their immediate family members will not be considered eligible for community membership on the panel."

# EV Charger Rebates Offered



The State Enrgy Commission has begun a rebate program as part of its efforts to increase the number of fast-charging electric vehicle charging stations in certain areas of California.

The California Energy Commission or CEC has started a \$30 million rebate program to build fast-chargers in 30 counties encompassing Eastern California, the Central Valley and the Central Coast, with the deadline to apply set for March 10.

The "Golden State Priority Project," part of the "California Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project or CALeV-IP," "is the first of its kind to fully focus on bringing fast-charging stations to disadvantaged, low-income and tribal communities," reads a news release from the CEC. "Projects that are shovel-ready will be prioritized for funding to accelerate build-out of the state's infrastructure network."

"This new model is designed to deploy charging infrastructure swiftly and equitably to make sure every EV driver feels confident they can refuel, and that need is especially critical in rural, low-income and tribal communities," CEC Commissioner Patty Monahan said. "These funds will help fill the gap in areas where we know charging is needed the most to bring the benefits of clean transportation to all Californians."

Eligible participants on the program include: businesses, nonprofits, public entities and tribes "with project sites in disadvantaged communities, low-income communities and tribal community census tracts in 30 counties across the state." San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties are included in this program.

Rebates can be used to buy direct current (DC) fast chargers "capable of at least 150 kilowatt-hours (kW) guaranteed power output at each active connector."

Other requirements include: Applicants must install at least four DC fast chargers per site and can receive funding for up to 20 per site; and chargers must be available for public use within 15 months of application approval. There is also a 50-50 cost sharing requirement, so one can only get rebates to cover half the cost of the new EV chargers.

If interested in this program, readers can go to the CEC project website at: [calevip.org](http://calevip.org). Deadline to apply is 5 p.m. Friday, March 10.



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News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Farewell Event for City Manager

The public is invited to a farewell open house honoring Morro Bay City Manager Scott Collins who will be leaving after five years of service.

The reception takes place on Friday, February 24 from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Morro Bay Community Center, 1001 Kennedy Way. Light refreshments and drinks will be served as officials wish Collins well in his future endeavors as the executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo as well as reflect on his positive impact on the City of Morro Bay.



Take the County Health Survey

Tell local leaders what your community needs to be healthy. County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department and community partners are working on the next iteration of SLO County's Community Health Assessment.

The countywide every-five-years health survey asks community members for their experiences with issues like quality of life, availability of services, physical and mental health, and more. Community members may receive an invitation to participate in the survey through a postcard in the mail or through social media.

The survey is for people 18 and older who live in SLO County. All responses are confidential and will not be connected to names, addresses or phone numbers. Also, you can skip any question that makes you uncomfortable, according to the County.

After completing the survey, there is an opportunity to enter a drawing to win one of four gift cards valued at \$100.

Take the 15-minute Community Health Survey at <https://bit.ly/3xoQ0q6>.

Deadline to take the survey is Friday, March 31 and results will be released sometime in the summer online at [slohealthcounts.org](http://slohealthcounts.org).

To learn more about results from the previous Community Health Assessment, go to [www.SLOHealthCounts.org/slocha](http://www.SLOHealthCounts.org/slocha).

Clean Up Week in March



It's time for spring-cleaning. Mission Country Disposal conducts Clean Up Week March 6 – 10 for customers to get rid of stuff they no longer need. Remember that clown painting you did in college?

Set out up to six bags, 32 gallon capacity size, each not to exceed 75 pounds and 4 feet in length. Place your garbage on the curb no later than 6 a.m. on your regular garbage collection day. Be sure to not block your containers because automated trucks are used.

Should you have metal, electrical or bulky items, call Mission Country Disposal at 805-543-0875 to schedule pick up. Special pricing for these items varies by city and are limited to two like items. Readers must call no later than Friday, March 3 to schedule the pickup of these items such as televisions, couches and small appliances. They will not be picked up unless you call.

Clean Up Week is a community service provided free to single-family residential garbage customers.

Poly College Corps Program Taking Applications

Cal Poly's #CaliforniansForAll College Corps is accepting applications now through March 17 from Cal Poly students interested in joining its 2023-24 program.

Cal Poly's 2022-23 program consists of 175 fellows who partner with a wide range of local and regional organizations to provide much-needed service work. The organizations include Community Climate Solutions, SLO Climate Coalition, Ecologistics, San Luis Coastal Unified School District and City Farm SLO, among others.

Locally, College Corps fellows contributed to storm cleanup efforts in January by assisting residents in need in Los Osos.

Cal Poly is one of more than 40 institutions to participate in the statewide program, now in its inaugural year. The university serves as the lead institution for the Coastal California Civic Leadership Consortium, which also consists of CSU Long Beach, Cuesta College and Allan Hancock College.

#CaliforniansForAll College Corps is hosting informational sessions for interested students through Feb. 28. For additional details and to apply to be a 2023-24 College Corps fellow, go to <https://bit.ly/40Ugptu>.

Morro Bay Museum Fire Scare

The Morro Bay Museum of Natural History temporarily closed on Wednesday, Feb. 15 following a report by employees of smoke in the building. The Morro Bay Fire Department investigated what was believed to be an electrical fire. No injuries to people or property were reported.

Los Osos CSD Meetings

The Los Osos Community Services District LOCSD continues their regularly scheduled board, Utilities Advisory Committee, Finance Advisory Committee, Emergency Services Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meetings.

Information for each meeting and how to get connected is available on the Agenda for each meeting. Agendas can be found at [losososcsl.org](http://losososcsl.org), which is posted a minimum of 72 hours before the meeting time.

- Upcoming Meetings:
- Finance Advisory Committee Meeting - February 27, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
  - Board of Directors Meeting Open Session - March 2, 2023 at 6 p.m.
  - Utilities Advisory Committee Meeting - March 15, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
  - Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting - March 21, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

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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PG&E Customers Could Receive Bill Credits

There could be some relief in sight for the high home gas bills folks are receiving.

At a time when higher natural gas prices are driving up energy costs, the new Power Saver Rewards Program is providing over \$55 million in bill credits to participating Pacific Gas and Electric Company customers.

The Power Saver Rewards Program, starting May 1, rewards residential participants for temporarily reducing energy use when the demand for electricity is high. Event days are triggered by the state's grid operator, the California Independent System Operator, calling a Flex Alert and/or an Energy Emergency Alert Watch, according to a news release issued by PG&E. Notifications to customers to reduce energy use as part of the program are sent out the day before an event. Over the ten event days in 2022, the average customer bill credit for program participants was \$35.

Currently more than 1.6 million customers are enrolled in the program, which can be found at <https://powersaver.pge.com>.

"Customers who reduced energy use between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. on event days will receive a bill credit," said the release. "The credit will be automatically applied; customers do not need to contact PG&E. Customers receive \$2 per kilowatt hour for decreasing electricity use during events. There is no penalty for not reducing energy."

The program, initiated by the California Public Utilities Commission, encourages energy conservation to lessen the overall strain on the grid and prevent the need for rotating outages.

"Customers successfully shifted energy usage away from the times of peak demand on event days," the release said. "During peak hours, customers temporarily reduced usage by taking actions such as turning their thermostat to 78 degrees or higher (health permitting), turning off lights not in use, unplugging electric vehicles, and waiting until after peak hours to use large appliances such as washers, dryers and electric ovens."

PG&E electric customers with a SmartMeter not enrolled in a conflicting peak hour program are eligible to participate. Most customers enrolled in a Community Choice Aggregator can also join. Customers can disenroll from the program at any time through the program website.

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Sex Predator Convicted

A North County man has been convicted on numerous charges of child molestation, the District Attorney's Office said in a news release.

On Jan. 26, a jury convicted Craig Anthony Grunow, 57, on 11 counts of sexual abuse of three children that occurred over a three-year period up in Heritage Ranch and he now faces several lifetimes in prison

Charges included one count of sexual intercourse with a child under 10, and 10 counts of committing a lewd act on a child under 14. He was also found guilty of committing lewd acts on multiple victims under 14, the release said, which is a special sentencing enhancement under the law.

Grunow's crimes "occurred in the Heritage Ranch area of rural San Luis Obispo County between August 2018 and August 2021. Two of the young survivors were well known to the defendant and the third young survivor had been invited into the defendant's home as a guest." Heritage Ranch is a neighborhood of homes around Lake Nacimiento.

D.A. Dan Dow said, "We admire the profound strength of the three young survivors in disclosing these terrible crimes and in describing to the jury what they endured at the hands of this sexual predator. We thank the jury for carefully considering all the evidence in this very troubling and emotional case. Without their courage, there would be no justice."

Grunow faces a maximum of 250-years to life in prison with sentencing scheduled for March 30 in Superior Court before Judge Covello. The case was investigated by the County Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation and Child Abuse Interview Team. Deputy D.A. Danielle Baker, who is assigned to the District Attorney's Sexual Violence Unit, was the prosecutor in Grunow's case.



Craig Anthony Grunow

Covello to serve four years in prison for crimes he was convicted of in a December 2022 trial.

"White collar crime is a serious matter that often involves predatory practices against victims who are elderly and vulnerable," said District Attorney Dan Dow. "I am proud of our special prosecutions unit that works hard to protect consumers and hold individuals and businesses accountable for their white collar crime."



Jeremy Walter Pemberton

The criminal case against Pemberton "was based on evidence that Pemberton had made misrepresentations and omitted important material information during the course of fundraising efforts in 2017 for a proposed business project in San Luis Obispo."

That project would have remodeled a former Sports Authority retail store in a large commercial space at the corner of Marsh and Chorro Streets. Pemberton was accused of misrepresenting to investors the amount of financing he had received from other investors and failed to disclose that his lease for the business project property was in default, the news release explained.

"Pemberton's plan was for his company, Discovery San Luis Obispo, to develop the site into a multi-use facility that included a bar, restaurant, and bowling alley," the release said. "The project promoted by Pemberton was never completed."

Indeed, the project was never even submitted to the City and essentially never went anywhere down the path of being approved and built.

At trial, "Pemberton was found guilty of felony securities fraud, financial elder abuse, and grand theft by false pretenses and the jury determined the theft crimes were in amount greater than \$500,000," the D.A.'s Office said.

Pemberton was remanded to the custody of the County Sheriff for transport to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. "He will be ordered to pay full restitution," the news release said, "and a restitution status determination hearing is scheduled for May 23, 2023 in Dept. 1 of the SLO County Superior Court. But four years in prison doesn't necessarily mean he'll spend that much time behind bars.

"A sentence to state prison for a specified number of years," the release said, "does not mean that the person will spend that amount of time incarcerated. Due to the complexity of California law regarding prison sentences and special credits for good behavior and participation in prison programs, it is impossible to predict how long the defendant will serve before being released back into the community."

The District Attorney Bureau of Investigation investigated the case and Deputy D.D. Ken Jorgensen, who is assigned to the District Attorney's Special Prosecutions Unit, was the prosecutor.

**SLO Bowling Alley Developer Rolls Gutter Ball**

A San Luis Obispo man, who rolled out a Downtown bowling alley project has rolled a gutter ball and been sentenced to State Prison on financial crimes.

The District Attorney's Office announced that Jeremy Walter Pemberton, 38, was sentenced by Judge Timothy

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Community

Diggin' Deep: Los Osos Disaster Relief Concert Feb. 26



Many Los Osos families suffered major damage to their homes from the January bomb cyclone of rain. As a local relief effort, Gary Freiberg and Paul Irving have teamed up to produce a benefit concert. The all-volunteer lineup of talent includes Zongo All -Stars, Strange Cake, Carbon City Lights, B & The Hive, and Mini Nova (featuring Scott Martin of WAR and Kenny Lee Lewis of the Steve Miller Band).

The Diggin' Deep relief concert happens on Sunday, February 26 at the South Bay Community Center in Los Osos from 12 to 6 p.m. This event is to raise funds for the disaster victims, and since it is an all-volunteer effort, every dollar raised will go directly to benefit the families in need. This is an all ages show. Entry is free, but donations are encouraged.

"The outpouring of community support has been tremendous with many local agencies and service groups working together to make this concert a success," Irving said. "Los Osos organizations and individuals have joined together to bring relief to families who could not prepare for the rains that broke daily rain records dating back to 1893."

The local nonprofit group People Helping People is collecting tax-deductible donations and disbursing them as needed to the victims of the January rain event. They're also organizing a large silent auction with donated items from local businesses. Rotary and Kiwanis are running the BBQ and serving food while some members of the Los Osos Community Services District are stepping up to serve drinks, and Celebrate Los Osos is sending volunteers to help with event operations.

Help the victim families by attending what is the biggest singular free benefit concert ever held in Los Osos. Cash donations are accepted at the concert or can be made online at supportlososos.com. Checks may also be sent payable to People Helping People (note "Disaster Relief" in the memo line) at PO Box 6221, Los Osos, CA 93412. Cash will be accepted at the event.

Making Adjustments to Thrive



Ibrahim "Abe" Abuhilal holds one of the handmade pizzas he's now offering at Grape Leaf Deli & Market in Downtown Morro Bay. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

Restaurants have to sometimes adjust their offerings whether it is menu items in the wake of a pandemic or even how they serve their customers; and one Downtown restaurateur has made his fair share of adjustments.

Ibrahim "Abe" Abuhilal and wife, Marie, have operated Grape Leaf Deli & Market at 844 Main St., since 2017, changing the restaurant several times to what is now a mostly takeout place after the pandemic hit and made everyone rethink their business models.

Grape Leaf Deli started as a sit-down eatery, then Abe started catering events, but with the dining room off limits during the pandemic, he put out tables and chairs in front of the building making it more of a sidewalk eatery.

Among the changes to his Mediterranean and Middle Eastern fare is a brick pizza oven, where he makes hand tossed pizzas like none you'll find elsewhere.

Abe says he makes everything himself, fresh daily — from the dough using special flour, to making his own sauce and mozzarella cheese. The herbs he also grows himself on the family's farm out in Chorro Valley.

Abe responded to Los Osos after the mudslide that inundated homes on Vista Court, baking pies to help feed the hard-working volunteers that turned out in droves to help their neighbors dig out from all that mud.

Marie says it's just one example of her husband's generous spirit and sense of community.

The simple pies that come out of his oven are unlike any of the other pizza parlors in town.

With the new oven has come another adjustment — take and bake pies.

Marie explains that they pre-make the pizzas, bake them half done and then sell them at the restaurant's booth at the Saturday Farmer's Market (starting at 3 p.m. every Saturday).

People today, Abe says, want convenience. How it works, is a person can buy one of Abe's pies at Farmer's Market (or any other time as well), take it home and after about 10 minutes in the oven to finish cooking, they'll have as fresh of a pizza as you'll find.

A lot has changed since Abe started Grape Leaf Deli, with several new eateries opening up in the Downtown core and two or three more being worked on now.

The result is that Downtown Morro Bay now has a diverse lineup of places to eat and types of foods to enjoy.

But you can bet that Grape Leaf's cheerful and generous, chief cook and bottle washer, Abe will make the adjustments needed to keep his offerings as fresh as the ingredients that go into the pizzas and other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern dishes Abe offers to a public that has become more diverse in its tastes and willingness to try foods from other cultures.

By The Sea — Six Years and Counting



The Board of Directors of By The Sea Productions – Front row: Kelli M. Poward, Sam Gottlieb, Rhonda Crowfoot, Anita Schwaber. Back row: Sarah Ruth Smith, Sheridan Cole, Janice Peters. Photo submitted

By Ruth Ann Angus

Sometimes you think things will never happen, this was Show players of By The Sea Productions, community theater in Morro Bay, felt as the pandemic dragged on. However, they are happy to have their seventh season fully underway.

"Surviving six years of live theater in a small town is a monumental achievement," said Janice Peters, a board member and one of the founders of the troupe. "Getting through the loss of a whole season was difficult."

No one could predict that the pandemic would last as long as it did and that put into question whether an audience would return when they were finally able to open.

By The Sea Productions morphed out of the theater players of the Pewter Plough Playhouse in Cambria and began with their first season in 2017. Finding a venue was their first chore and the group was thrilled when Sidney Symington, pastor of Saint Peter's By the Sea Episcopal Church in Morro Bay, offered the use of the church hall. Symington, who is a bit of a thespian, was happy for the collaboration.

"The church benefits as well as us," Peters said, "as we pay monthly rent and a portion of ticket sales."

Volunteers got busy constructing the basic stage that is used for every production but is changed with additions of windows and doors and stage left and stage right entrances and exits depending on the footprint of the play. The director is in charge of what goes into the set and the whole thing works by illusion.

By The Sea Continued on page 9

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Police Blotter



• **Feb. 12:** Police contacted a familiar scurvy dog down on The Embarcadero who had four bench warrants. He was locked in the brig for his transgressions and will no doubt soon walk the plank.

• **Feb. 12:** Police responded to a disturbance somewhere on the Embarcadero and found a 23-year-old lipspittle dingus with four bench warrants. He was tossed into the gaol until the judge can see him.

• **Feb. 12:** Police got another report of a disorderly gadfly raising a ruckus somewhere in town. Logs indicated they contacted a 23-year-old and nicked him for suspicion of drunk and disorderly conduct, no doubt where the tourists can see him, too.

• **Feb. 12:** Police stopped another suspicious vehicle at an undisclosed location and time. The driver, 46, was arrested for driving on a suspended license, suspended for DUI; and suspicion of possession a crack pipe.

• **Feb. 11:** Police responded to a disturbance in the 400 block of Monterey. Logs indicated a 28-year-old louse was nicked for alleged spousal battery.

• **Feb. 11:** Police were called to the scene on Quintana Road of a suspected drug overdose. Logs indicated they confiscated suspected illegal drugs found at the scene, an apparent case of better late than never.

• **Feb. 10:** Police responded to a disturbance in the 600 block of La Jolla. Logs indicated they arrested a 44-year-old mulish fellow who violated a stay-away court order.

• **Feb. 10:** Police responded to a reported robbery somewhere on Main Street. Logs indicated officers caught the scoundrel but the victim declined to press charges, an apparent case of “never mind.”

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• **Feb. 9:** Police responded to City Park on Harbor Street for some schmoie acting a few fries short of a Happy Meal. Secret agent Double-O I.Q. got nicked for being schwasted in public and a bench warrant.

• **Feb. 8:** Police responded to a report of a suspicious subject behind the shopping center at 610 Quintana. Logs indicated the fruit-loop dingus first gave police a phony name, then let officers search him and of course they found “multiple narcotics violations.” Naturally, he was cited and released.

• **Feb. 7:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow in the 100 block of Main. Logs indicated the chap was nicked for suspicion of being on the razzle in public.

• **Feb. 7:** According to logs, at about 3:57 a.m. an unknown graffidiot tagged the outside of Spencer’s Fresh Market on North Main Street.

• **Feb. 6:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle somewhere on Morro Bay Boulevard at an undisclosed time. The 23-year-old woman driver turned out to not have a license. She was cited, but her car got arrested, which seems a bit bass-ackwards.

• **Feb. 6:** Police responded to Napa Avenue for a reported disturbance. Logs indicated a 31-year-old woman was arrested for suspicion of burglary, making terrorist threats, crash-n-dash and of course being schnockerred, which explains a lot.

• **Feb. 6:** Yet another annoying flesh monkey was contacted on Quintana Road and arrested on intoxicifornication.

• **Feb. 5:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle someplace on Main Street for a code violation. Logs indicated the dingus driver, 40, had a suspended license and, of course, no insurance, and got a ticket, which he’ll no doubt ignore.

• **Feb. 5:** Police were called at 12:11 p.m. to a disturbance on Pacific Street. Logs indicated the cause was a 14-year-old crankypated little imp behaving like a brat and screaming at her family.

• **Feb. 5:** Police responded at an undisclosed time to an undisclosed address on Main Street for a domestic dustup. Logs indicated a 67-year-old tool had violated a stay-the-hell-away court order, violated probation, and allegedly committed a kidnapping and domestic violence. The fooliot was tossed into jail because even duct tape can’t fix stupid.

• **Feb. 4:** Police responded to a disturbance on La Jolla Street. Logs indicated a 58-year-old ruffian was nicked for

suspicion of domestic battery after he allegedly roughed up someone he was supposed to love , honor and cherish, and was also apparently placed on a mental health hold, suicide watch as he was a danger to himself or others.

• **Feb. 3:** Police responded at 8 p.m. to a reported intruder at St. Timothy’s Catholic Church on Kennedy Way. Logs indicated they didn’t know who’d trespassed against them, but didn’t want to be led into temptation for retaliation and would no doubt forgive them anyway. But God may not be so forgiving.

• **Feb. 3:** Police responded to a home on Anchor Street where some Mamaluke woman had broken into someone’s house while they were at home. She was cited for unauthorized entry into an occupied dwelling, a.k.a. trespassing, in this week’s example of why we need SWAT.

• **Feb. 3:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow on Fairview Avenue who, of course, had a bench warrant. He was issued another disappearance ticket and released.

• **Feb. 2:** Police contacted a suspicious woman in the 900 block of Balboa who turns out had an out-of-county bench warrant and took her in to await a bus ride back to whatever rock she crawled out from under.

• **Feb. 2:** Police contacted yet another model citizen at the Creek Bed Estates on Quintana who had two bench warrants. He was issued a third ticket to ignore and allowed back into the wild.

• **Feb. 1:** Some apparent pacifist on Kings Avenue turned in some ammunition for police to destroy.

• **Feb. 1:** Some scoundrel stole the tags off a car on Atascadero Road, as the tourist tax is levied once again.

• **Feb. 1:** Police contacted another street yob, 30, on Quintana Road who had a trio of bench warrants and got benched into County Jail.

• **Feb. 1:** Police contacted a familiar face on Quintana Road. The 21-year-old budding anarchist had two bench warrants and was also found to allegedly be in possession of illegal drugs and paraphernalia.

• **Jan 31:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at some undisclosed spot in town. The driver, a 27-year-old woman, was cited and released for driving on a suspended license.

• **Jan. 31:** Police responded to a disturbance at City Park on Harbor Street. Logs indicated they discovered a raucous woman, 65, going all woolly-booger and engaging in a load of nincompoopery. She was nicked for suspicion of being stultified in public and having three bench warrants.

Boat Christebed From page 1



From left, Harbor Director Ted Schiafone, Mayor Carla Wixom, and Harbor Patrol Chief Becka Kelly christen the new '3869' patrol boat.

Kelly introduced the newest full time harbor patrol officer, Charlie Howland. Howland and Schiafone are the first two people hired at the Harbor Department to come from out of the area. She noted that in the past, vacancies have always been filled from within, as employees work their way up the ladder.

Howland had his family — wife and two young daughters — do the badge pinning ceremony, which lent a bit of comedic relief to the proceedings, as the girls tried hard not to poke their daddy in the chest.

The new boat, christened No. 3869 — or just ‘69 — was feted with a ribbon cutting by the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, and Mayor Carla Wixom smashed a champagne bottle on the bow cleat (it was actually a fake sugar bottle not real glass).

With the new boat finally able to be used for patrols,



Charlie Howland is swarmed by his wife and two daughters trying to pin his badge on him.



Charlie Howland, the newest full time Harbor Patrol Officer, takes the oath of office with Patrol Chief Becka Kelly

the department again is up to three patrol boats, all Radon Craft, and Howland fills a position that has been vacant since 2010.

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By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Nominations Wanted for Community Awards

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce wants help honoring the best of 2022. "We are calling on all members of the community to nominate exceptional individuals for consideration in the following categories," chamber officials said in a newsletter. Nominations must be received by Monday, March 6 for consideration. Both third party and self-nominations are accepted and welcomed. Nominees must not have received the award previously.

Categories include:

- Business of the Year
- Non Profit of the Year
- Citizen of the Year
- Living Treasure

Download nomination forms then print, scan and email to [info@morrochamber.org](mailto:info@morrochamber.org) or print then mail/drop your completed nomination form to: Morro Bay Chamber Attn: Community Awards 695 Harbor Street Morro Bay, CA 93442

Local Recognized in List of Top CEOs

Los Osos resident made the list of top CEOs of rural hospitals Becker's Healthcare named Rena Salamacha as one of the "80 Rural Hospital CEOs to Know." The list highlights top executives from rural hospitals across the nation.

"The executives featured on this list have put their heart and soul into ensuring their communities have access to the best healthcare services possible," said a news release. "While rural hospitals across the country have faced closure in recent years, these leaders have developed a model for not only surviving, but thriving." Salamacha, a los Osos resident since 2007, is the CEO of MEE Memorial in King City. She is responsible for leading a team of executives and care providers charged with ensuring her facility provides high-quality healthcare services to its local community. After taking over as CEO in early 2019, Salamacha went into the COVID-19 pandemic facing a unique challenge and demonstrated her ability to bring various groups together and kept up with round-the-clock healthcare delivery. She also expanded services, campus locations and led her organization-wide revitalization of the system's business functions, said Becker's, a magazine for hospital business, news, and analysis for hospital healthcare system executives. "Rural hospitals are critical to the success of the U.S. healthcare system to expand access to care in remote areas," said Brendan Talian, Becker's staff writer. "CEOs at the helm of these important community institutions have many responsibilities to make sure their hospitals thrive."



To review the other 79 CEOs, go to [beckershospitalreview.com](http://beckershospitalreview.com).

Bill to Fund Military Communities Infrastructure

Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay) introduced the Stronger Defense Communities Act, Assembly Bill 444, a bipartisan bill to create a way for California to partner with the federal government to fund critical infrastructure in state communities that host military bases. "California is home to thousands of military families who not only sacrifice for the betterment of our country, but also provide significant economic contributions to our state," Addis said in a news release. "This bill helps California's defense communities by supporting local efforts to access federal funds for water, road and other improvements that benefit military families and the communities where they live." Currently, California defense communities can apply for federal infrastructure grants through the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot (DCIP) program, a federal program that funds military-related infrastructure improvements. While the DCIP is an important tool, communities are often not able to meet the matching requirements that many of the grants require. AB 444 would provide state assistance to these communities, providing funding to match the grant requirements under the DCIP. The bill would also support these communities in identifying potential DCIP projects through other grants. Communities often need assistance in identifying, planning, and implementing these projects when they cannot afford to do so with local funds. The legislation is pending committee referral in the State Assembly. Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh (R-Yucaipa) is the principal coauthor of the bill.

Dine out to Help Boys and Girls Clubs

Save money and help a nonprofit. Dining for Charities continues their support of Boys & Girls Clubs. Visit the Dining for Charities website at <http://bit.ly/3YAVo5B> and order gift cards to local restaurants at a deep discount. Through the month of February, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Mid Central Coast receives 15% from every card sold! Enjoy great meals, support local businesses, and raise money. There are a slew of local restaurants to chose from including Beach Burgers in Morro Bay, Central Coast Pizza in Los Osos, The Great American Fish Company in Morro Bay and more. Boys & Girls Clubs of Mid Central Coast provides a place where kids can go after school and during the summer to grow beyond the classroom. Clubs support all youth and teens – of every race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic status, and religion – in reaching their full potential.

Spokes Meeting



Spokes for Nonprofits introduces an opportunity for nonprofit organizations in the same sector to network and

Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 12

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# Community

## Playing and Partying for Pooches



Players who participated in the 'Playing for Pooches' golf tournament in memory of Nancy Brown. Photo submitted

A posthumous birthday celebration was held to honor the life of Nancy Brown of Morro Bay while raising \$3,722.00 for a cause she believed in. Nancy was a long time local resident who loved golf, her dogs, her family, her friends and her Zilch dice game. Woods Humane Society was the charity closest to her heart, so an event that combined all these passions and raised money for the society was held. "It's a perfect day and mom is smiling down on us all," said Lisa Brown, Nancy's daughter, as she welcomed golfers and party goers on February 6 at Sea Pines Golf Resort in Los Osos for what would have been Nancy Brown's 81st

birthday. Nancy passed away November 11, 2022 after a final battle with her heart, and it was her family's wishes that she be remembered at a fun-filled event with a cause. Golfers from Sea Pines, Avila Beach and Morro Bay Women's Clubs competed in "Playing for Pooches," a 9-hole scramble golf tournament. When the last putt was sunk, golfers joined guests on the patio at Sea Pines for a birthday party with Zilch, silly prizes and a time to reminisce. Contributions to the charity flooded in throughout the month leading up to the party, and the generosity didn't stop there. The pinnacle of the event came with the arrival of Em-



Lisa Brown presents a donation to Emily L'Heureux, Woods Humane Society's director of development, along with and Woods' 'graduate,' Ranger. Photo submitted

ily L'Heureux, Woods Humane Society director of development, along with Ranger, a German shepherd and Woods' "graduate." Together they mingled with guests while Emily explained the programs and services provided at the shelter and outlined how donations help support these services. As Ranger wagged good-bye, Lisa and her brother, Rick, led guests in a lively rendition of "Happy Birthday to You." A toast was made and the dice kept rolling.



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Community

Takin' Care of Business From page 10

discuss common challenges with "Mission-alike" Roundtables, which are held via zoom once a month, focusing on a different sector each month.

Roundtables will focus on youth programs on March 29, environmental quality, protection and beautification on April 26, housing focused services on May 31 and animal related services on June 21.

A hallmark feature of the roundtables is a commitment to confidentiality to encourage mutual support and a candid exchange of ideas. Through a facilitated discussion participants will have the opportunity to share good news and/or something that's "keeping them up at night." They may also offer a "spotlight topic" for discussion during the course of the 75-minute session. Roundtables are free to all participants.

To register, visit the Spokes Event Calendar at <http://bit.ly/3Km9hAt>.

Celebrate Downtown SLO Improvements

If you shop, work or play in Downtown SLO, celebrate the improvements in the area by attending a ribbon cutting celebration on Tuesday, February 28 at 2 p.m. in the Downtown Center Plaza at 890 Marsh Street. The event is sponsored by the City of San Luis Obispo.

The downtown complete street improvements included new bike lanes, wider sidewalks, upgraded pedestrian crossings, and much more. The project was among several included in the SLO in Motion this past year, a multi-million-dollar investment San Luis Obispo that aims to improve mobility, accessibility, and safety for all modes of transportation.

Mayor Erica A. Stewart and members of the City Council will join community leaders and project stakeholders in cutting the ribbon and celebrating this major Capital Improvement Project for the City. Festivities include refreshments and an informational booth showcasing the project's features and benefits.

"We are excited to unveil these much-anticipated improvements and celebrate their completion with our community," said Jennifer Rice, project manager. "SLO in Motion is a testament to our commitment to providing safe and accessible transportation options for all."

For more information, go to the City of San Luis Obispo's website at [www.slocity.org/SLOinMotion](http://www.slocity.org/SLOinMotion).

Lunch with the League

Check out the League of Women Voters "Lunch with the League Zoom event on Wednesday, March 8 starting at noon.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Planning Director James Worthley presents "A Vision for Growth: The 2023 SLO County Regional Transportation Plan." The plan will identify transportation needs, discuss strategies and resources, and describe a vision for growth and development in the county through 2045.

This Zoom event is free to the public, but registration is required at <http://bit.ly/3k6UtuH>.

Kim Murry, co-chairperson of the LWV SLOCO Natural Resources Committee moderates the webinar.

Participants will be able to submit questions. For more information, contact the League at [naturalresources@lwvslo.org](mailto:naturalresources@lwvslo.org) or call 805-242-6990.

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



Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

In honor of the more than 58,000 American service members who lost their lives in the Vietnam War, The Wall That Heals comes to San Luis Obispo County March 16 -March 19 at the Madonna Inn. The official ¾ scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C also teaches all generations the sacrifices of our veterans as well as Vietnam War history. It remains on display 24 hours a day. Admission is free. The event is presented by the San Luis Obispo County Veterans Services Office and The Central Coast Veterans Memorial Museum in partnership with the Madonna Inn and Legacy Village. Learn more, donate to support the event or sign-up to volunteer at the wall by visiting [www.vetmuseum.org](http://www.vetmuseum.org) or by calling (805) 781-5766.

...

Some of the best surfers in the world will converge at Morro Rock this weekend for a qualifying event for the World Surf League. The SLO Cal Open's Morro Bay event runs from Thursday, Feb. 23 to Sunday, Feb. 26 and will bring some of best up-and-coming pro surfers to town.



Surfers are slated to take to the water starting about 10 a.m. daily and heats will be held all day long.

Established in 1976, the WSL "is dedicated to changing the world through the inspirational power of surfing by creating authentic events, experiences, and storytelling to inspire a growing, global community to live with purpose,

originality, and stoke," the organization's website said. The WSL is a worldwide organization headquartered in Santa Monica, Calif., with regional offices in North America, Latin America, Asia Pacific, and EMEA. The event is free to watch but it's likely to get crowded in the Morro Rock parking lot.

...



Internationally shown artist Frank Eber presents lectures and painting demonstrations of both oil and watercolor at the Cambria Center for the Arts. The topic is finding creativity and personal style in your art. Pique your interest for his upcoming painting workshops at the center. Watercolor lecture and demo is Feb. 25 from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. An oil painting lecture and demo is also Feb. 25 from 2- 4:30 p.m. Members' cost is \$25, non-members are \$30. Space is limited. For more information, go to [www.cambriaarts.org](http://www.cambriaarts.org).

...

SLO Skiers, a local, non-profit sports and social club for adults holds its next monthly meeting at Dairy Creek Golf Course Clubhouse in San Luis Obispo at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, March 1. Meetings are free and yearly membership is only \$65. Social hour from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. Meeting follows. Social and sports activities occur year around.

The Psychic February 17- March 12

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Sandy Cha Mumper Financial Advisor

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Community

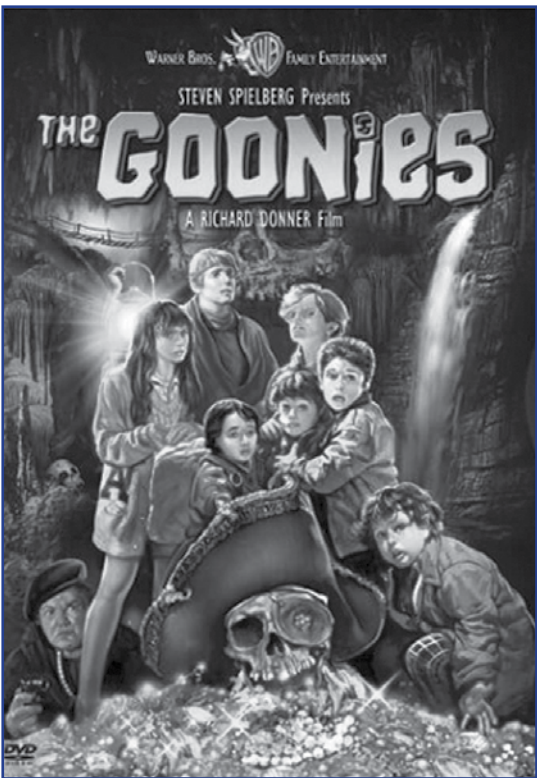
Tickets for the 81st annual Poly Royal Rodeo are available now. The rodeo takes place at the Cotton Rosser Rodeo Complex on campus during Cal Poly's Open House, with three full nights of action-packed performances.

The two-night general admission events begin Friday, April 14 with the Annual Poly Royal Rodeo Performance and concludes Saturday, April 15 with the Poly Royal Rodeo Finals. Both events start at 6:30 p.m. and are followed by a concert. In addition, a Cal Poly Rodeo Showcase and concert will be held for students only at a reduced cost on Wednesday, April 12.

The Poly Royal Rodeo is the marquee event on campus during Cal Poly's annual Open House. The event features the top collegiate rodeo athletes from around the West Coast who have advanced to the championship performance from the weekend's earlier rounds. Athletes will compete for a championship title in events such as barrel racing, team roping, breakaway roping, tie down roping, saddle bronc riding, bareback riding, bull riding and steer wrestling.

Tickets are \$50 for general admission and \$20 for children ages 2 to 12. Admission is free for children under 2. They are available at <https://ticketscalpoly.eventue.net>. All proceeds from the event benefit the Cal Poly Rodeo Program.

Cambria Center for the Arts announced a Call For Artists to submit work to fill their member's halls and to accompany the March/April exhibit of Liz Hampton-Derivan. Liz's exhibit includes photography, mixed media, hot and cold wax, paints and pastels. Both 2 and 3D art and crafts are welcomed for the member's and local artist's exhibit. Work may be submitted online to be shown the physical gallery as well as the virtual gallery. For more information and to submit your entries online, go to [www.cambriaarts.org](http://www.cambriaarts.org). Submissions area accepted February 24 to 28. Located at



The following are free events brought to you by the Los Osos Library located at 2075 Palisades Ave. Reach them by phone at 805-528-1862. All library programs follow current California and County of San Luis Obispo health guidelines.

**Free Tax Assistance with United Way** - Sundays, March 5, March 12, March 19, March 26, April 2, April 16  
Receive free tax preparation assistance at the Los Osos Library with United Way of San Luis Obispo. No income limits are imposed, but fees may apply depending on the schedule prepared. No appointment is needed.

**Paws to Read** - Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15  
Come and read your favorite book to Berkeley! She's at the Los Osos Library on Wednesday afternoons. School Age.

**Featured Artists** - Wall artist TBD  
Display Case is Dina Stern with her hand dyed textiles  
**Storytime** - Thursdays, 10:30-11 a.m.  
Stories, dance, and music for toddlers and preschoolers.  
**Stay Young with Qi Gong!** - Fridays, 9 – 10 a.m.  
(rain cancels)  
Qi Gong is a system for physical, mental and spiritual

development that has roots dating back thousands of years in China. It consists of flowing movements and meditations that cultivate life force energy (called qi by the Chinese). The basics of qi gong are not difficult to learn and practice, and are particularly beneficial for older adults. Instructor Devin Wallace was certified to teach by qi gong master Lee Holden. Devin has taught at hospitals, fitness and yoga centers and also does private classes.

**E-Device Class** - Wednesdays, 9:15-10 a.m.  
Bring your electronic device in and Diana will do her best to answer any questions you have.

**Coloring and Texture Art** - Friday, March 3, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
Drop by the Los Osos Library to create texture-rubbing art! All ages welcome.

**Read Together** - Thursday, March 9, 5:30-6:45 p.m.  
Jonniepat Mobley facilitates the group reading of a play/script. No audition necessary. Come in, take a script and read the play aloud together.

**Family Movie** - Saturday, March 11, 2 p.m.  
Watch "The Goonies." It's rated PG. The library also provides popcorn. Everyone is invited to attend this wonderful movie



Building a Peaceful Community

The Peace Tea program of Yes! We Can Peacebuilders takes place Tuesday, February 28, at 2 p.m. at the Estero Bay United Methodist Church, 3000 Hemlock Avenue, in Morro Bay. Is violence in the world getting you down? There is another way – positive peacebuilding using non-violence. Join the video program "An Introduction to Basic Nonviolence" presented by Michael N. Nagler, president and cofounder of The Metta Center for Nonviolence. "Nonviolence is not the recourse of the weak but actually calls for an uncommon kind of strength," Nagler said. "It is not a refraining from something but the engaging of a positive force."

Events Continued on page 14

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Community

Events From page 13

In this program Nagler shows that nonviolence is more than a tactic; it is a way of living. He recounts the successful methods that helped Gandhi free India from colonial rule and Martin Luther King, Jr. liberate people of color from oppression.

After the video tea and cookies will be served as attendees discuss the topics of “Fight, Flight and the Third Way, The Uses of Nonviolence, and Satyagraha, Gandhi’s Way.”

Yes! We Can Peacebuilders is a division of People of Faith for Justice, a 501c3 nonprofit. For more information, go to [www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org](http://www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org) or email at [yeswecanpeacebuilders1@gmail.com](mailto:yeswecanpeacebuilders1@gmail.com).

...

Join the Cayucos Library at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, February 24 for “Piedras Blancas - Seasons of the Year,” a dynamic slide and video presentation of the seasons of our Central Coast elephant seals. Presented by the Friends of the Elephant Seal. This program is free to attend and no registration is required. Contact the Cayucos Library at (805) 995-3312 for more information.

...



The Cal Poly Wind Bands Winter Concert featuring the Cuesta College Wind Ensemble takes place at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 5, in Miossi Hall of the Performing Arts Center’s Christopher Cohan Center.

The concert, titled “Bandemonium,” will be presented by Cal Poly’s Wind Orchestra and Wind Ensemble, and is the second in the Cal Poly bands’ season series. The three bands will perform favorite standards of the genre as well as new works for wind bands. The program will include Gustav Holst’s “Moorside Suite,” John Williams’ “Evening at Pops” and James Barnes’ “Yama Midori.” Russell Peck’s “Cave” will be presented in a staging choreographed by students of the Cal Poly Wind Ensemble.

The program closes with Richard Strauss’ “Feierlicher Einzug,” arranged by Cal Poly Director of Bands Emeritus William V. Johnson, in a combined ensemble of all three bands.

Tickets are \$15 and \$20 general and \$10 students. They can be purchased from the Cal Poly Ticket Office between noon and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. To order by phone, call 805-SLO-4TIX (805-756-4849). Event parking is sponsored by the PAC.

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

# OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

To take them is Illegal

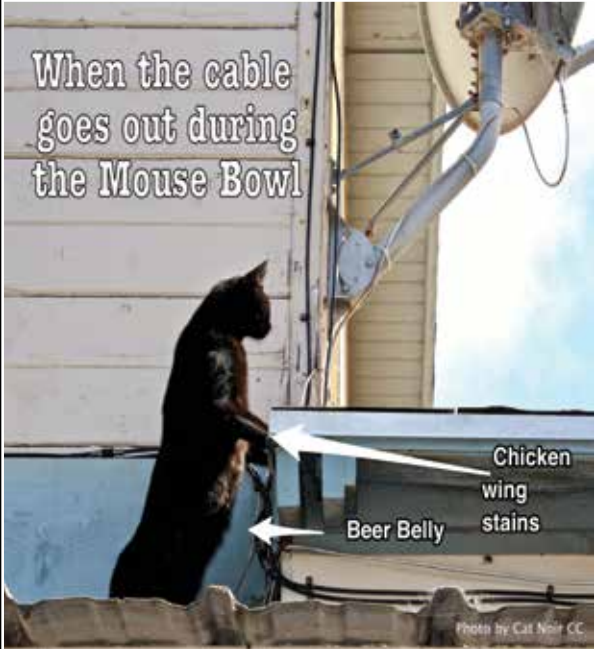
By Catherine Kornreich

Oh, my little seashell, glistening in the sand.. I want so very badly to hold you in my hand. And little clumps of mussels, clinging to the rock, “You would be so yum- my, sizzling in my wok.” But I respect these neighbors, and love to see the glee



On friends and family faces when they come to see. The hermit crabs are bustling in this tidal pool I see a kid yell to his dad “Hey Pops! These are so cool!” He puts some in his bucket but his papa says, “No, son, We need to leave them in their hometo be loved by everyone.” I see an orange starfish suctioned to the pier When the tide goes out a bithis beauty is quite clear. As I wander a bit further, along the lovely beach Pretty white sand dollars are all within my reach. One of them has made a path: a circling delight But all the others sit there, they’ve turned a brilliant

white. I see folks bend to pick them upand toss the ones they break I want to yell, “they’re fragile! Be kind, for goodness sake!” And then there are the seagulls fussing all about A very shrieky, noisy bird makes sure I hear his shout. As I get near he flies up high then drops a clam to crack On hardened sand right up ahead then he enjoys a snack. Yes, walking on the seashore is certainly a treat I turn around to head back home, the ocean can’t be beat! I’m glad I can enjoy these friends, to take them is illegal. But as I saw again today they feed things like that sea gull. Then I see a small, brown mound, I get up close: it stinks. Now, this is treasure I’ll take away. “No beauty here,” me thinks.



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# Community

## SLO Symphony Gala Celebrates Moulin Rouge

Photos by Dean Sullivan

The San Luis Obispo Symphony held a Moulin Rouge themed Gala at Embassy Suites in SLO on Saturday, February 11. The event was held to raise funds for the Symphony's 2023-2024 and the first party of this scale post COVID.

The event ended on a high note when the Symphony was able to obtain two co-sponsors for their entire upcoming season, Peggy Lance Little and Dr. Klaus Gottlieb. Money was also raised for the Symphony's various educational programs.

The emcee for the evening was Genelle Padilla of KSBY and the sponsors for the evening were KCBX, Bank of the Sierra, and Daou Vineyards. Members of the Youth Symphony, lead by San Luis Obispo Symphony orchestra member Grace Seng and Concertmaster Emily Lanzone, entertained the audience with a beautiful performance. Local band The Topsy Gypsies also played while guests danced the night away.



# A Dose of Good Dogma



## Tidbits of Mastery

By Lisa Ellman

I've covered many specific topics in these columns, so I'd like to address some random bits of training information and learning about what I think dog owners should always keep in mind.

First, watching Youtube videos on dog training. Not the best idea. A great majority of these videos may only serve to confuse you, and your dog. It's not your dog in the video, the people in the video don't know you or your dog, your dog may not respond appropriately or in any way near the way the dog in the video responds.

What do you do? Your dog may require very different techniques or approaches to training, depending on their age, background (if a rescue), physical health, breed or temperament. It's the same with training books. If you read five or six books by different authors, you may be confused about what to do. Often one book will contradict another book you may have read. Some of the videos and books may also be offering "old school solutions": choke chains, force, helicoptering and no positive reinforcement.

My best suggestion for helping you train your dog, the one I always give to clients is, if you want to teach your dog a command or a new behavior or eliminate a bad behavior, you must understand how your dog actually learns. Read books about how your dog thinks, why they react to things differently, how their brain is wired. Spoiler Alert: it is NOT like ours. Learn what drives them, what even is a drive? Why treating their behavior as if they were human might actually be reinforcing the behavior you want to extinguish. Subscribe to newsletters like "Your Dog" or "Dog Watch," published by veterinary universities, or "The Whole Dog Journal." Read a book on dog psychology. A really good one, that's not overly scientific, is "The Dog's Mind" by Dr. Bruce Fogle. Books by Jean Donaldson will

Tidbits From page 17

# DUTCHMAN'S

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The Cambria Film Festival recently announced the winners of this year's film festival hosted during a live awards night. The program capped five days showing more than 60 competition films, filmmaker talks, world premieres, special programming and gala events.

The Nancy Green Founder's Award for the film that best exemplified the festival's goal of exploring romance and the complexities of love went to "Look Who's There" (Italy). The feature-length film directed by Riccardo Camilli explores the dynamics of love, death and moving forward.

The judging panel made its official selections from more than 400 feature and short films submitted from around the world. The judges awarded Best Feature Film to "Hard Shell, Soft Shell" (France), directed by Emma Benestan. They awarded Best Short Film to "The Fool's Mate" (United Kingdom), directed by Cian Llewellyn. The Best Animated Film went to "A Fleeting Moment" (United States), directed by Allyanna Demafeliz. The award for Best Long-Form Short (an award for short films more than 20 minutes in length) went to "Shams" (Belgium), directed by Pauline Beugnies. For the first time, the judges also gave a Best Documentary award; it went to "Blue Dots" (Italy), directed by Lorenzo Squarcia.

Two additional awards were based on audience balloting. "Róise & Frank" (Ireland), directed by Rachael and Peter Murphy, took home the Audience Award for Favorite Short. "Blue Dots" received the Audience Award for Favorite Feature, in its second win of the night.

In addition, the Director's Award for Artistic Achievement, chose by the organizing directors of the Festival, was presented to "Sweet Disaster" (Germany), directed by Laura Lehmus.

At a special screening on Friday evening, the Cambria Heart Award, given to acknowledge a unique or special exploration of the festival theme of love, was given to director Don Scardino for "Our (Almost Completely True) Story" (United States). The award was accepted in person by the film's stars Mariette Hartley and Jerry Sroka—whose own real-life, late-in-life romance was the movie's inspiration.

Another highlight of the Festival was the packed-house, world premiere of "Something to Crow About." This documentary from Robin Smith was the behind-

A behind-the-scenes look at the people and work it takes to put on the annual Cambria Scarecrow Festival is the subject of the film, 'Something to Crow About.'

Mariette Hartley and Jerry Sroka, stars of the Cambria Film Festival Heart Award recipient 'Our (Almost Completely True) Story' accepting the award.

the-scene story of what it takes to produce the Cambria Scarecrow Festival each October.

Rounding out the awards announcement, the Cambria Film Festival announced the winner of its annual Film Grant for Emerging Filmmakers. This year, the grant was awarded to Aiden Glikman, a junior at Chapman University in Orange, California.

The Cambria Film Festival is an official activity of the Cambria Center for the Arts, a non-profit dedicated to local arts. This year's festival sponsors were James and Elaine Levin Anderson, Ami Belli (in memory of Nancy Green), William and Diane Franciscovich, and many other local businesses and individuals. The Festival will return in 2024 the weekend of February 7-11

For more information about the Festival, go to [www.CambriaFilmFestival.com](http://www.CambriaFilmFestival.com).

Morro Bay High Wins Regional Mock Trial

The Morro Bay High School Mock Trial Team will advance to the California State Finals in Los Angeles on March 17-19 after their victory over Mission Prep High School in the SLO County Regional Competition.

Mock Trial is both a school-wide club and an academic competitive team in which students work with legal professionals and their peers to prepare a court case. The season runs from September through March, and the competition is put on by the Constitutional Rights Foundation, says the school's website. Photo submitted

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# Letter's To The Editor

## Thank You to People Helping People

Like many in Los Osos, I appreciate your thorough and thoughtful coverage of the recent storm-related flooding that so devastated several of our neighborhoods. Given the cumbersome and bureaucratic process to receive government assistance, your detailed coverage of the (now closed) Disaster Recovery Center in San Luis Obispo was very helpful. I've never seen so many acronyms and organizations named in a single story. Which is why I was puzzled that the most local and responsive non-profit organization of all wasn't mentioned once.

People Helping People (PHP) was on the ground distributing immediate and direct aid in the form of gift cards, rentals of storage pods, deposits to contractors and housing. Within the first 10 days, prior to the dispersal of any other aid from any other source, they had given out over \$15,000 and I'm certain that has at least doubled. The fact that PHP - founded back in the 1970s - has no overhead (all volunteers and donations) means every contribution to the organization goes to people in need. That is why they will be handling the distribution of proceeds from the upcoming Disaster Relief Concert at the South Bay Community Center on Sunday, February 26. If you cannot attend this wonderful event, you can still help by sending a donation to PHP, PO Box 6221, Los Osos, CA 93412. Just write Disaster Relief Fund on the memo line of your check, a dedicated account has been established.

If you can make it out on the 26th you are in for a treat. Five of the best bands in the County (seriously, check out the lineup on the posters around town!), a silent auction

similar to that of the Christmas-time Needs N Wishes benefit, food provided by the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, and delicious beer and wine courtesy your favorite pubs and restaurants.

A true disaster has affected many in our community and it will take all of the benefit concerts, Go Fund Me's (thanks Diana) and resources from Los Osos Cares that we can muster. I just wanted to say thanks to People Helping People and acknowledge their length of service to this community. I hope to see everyone at the Community Center on the Sunday, the 26th, from 11:30 until 6 p.m.

Chuck Cesena  
Los Osos

## Address Homelessness in Budget Cycle

The League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County urges the County and incorporated Cities to address housing and homelessness as a priority goal as they develop their work plans for the coming budget cycle. As part of this goal, we ask that they take part in developing and approving the Regional Compact on Homelessness as a basis for coordinating the work countywide.

In August 2022 the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors adopted the San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness: 2022-2027. The goal of this 5-year plan is to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness by 50% over current levels. To achieve this goal it is essential that the provision of housing and services be coordinated. Lack of coordination in the current system has caused duplication of efforts, competition for resources, service gaps, and an inability to manage efforts effectively across the County.

A Regional Compact for Homelessness will enable the County and Cities to allocate responsibilities and resources efficiently. Each jurisdiction will have input on this process to ensure that the burdens and benefits are fairly shared.

Right now, as jurisdictions in SLO County are going through goal setting and adopting work plans for the cur-

rent budget cycle, each jurisdiction should adopt housing and homelessness, including a plan to join the Regional Compact on Homelessness, as a priority goal. Homelessness is the critical social issue of our day and one that the county and cities must address together.

We urge all residents to ask their city councils to include the Regional Compact on Homelessness in their plans.

Cindy Marie Absey, President  
League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County

## Where is the Chamber's Support?

In spite of having three business owners on the Morro Bay City Council, Morro Bay businesses are out of luck when it comes to support from the council.

The Morro Bay Art Association Gallery on Main Street has been in existence for 60 years. That's longer than some city council members have been alive. The Art Association sponsors the successful and popular Art in the Park three times a year in City Park. The event brings vendors, tourists, and locals together, benefiting other businesses in town.

Of the three business owners on the city council — Cyndi Edwards (The Skin Shop), Jen Ford (Rock Harbor Marketing), Carla Wixom (Carla's Country Kitchen, retired) — only Mayor Wixom supported the Art Association's cautionary request to postpone already delayed construction at City Park until after tourist season. Absent: the ever-present-at-city-council-meetings Chamber of Commerce to support one of its own.

This lack of business support does not bode well for the newly formed ad hoc committee tasked with reviewing the possible implementation of a downtown design district. How will only two lonely downtown business owners stand up against an abundance of city officials and chamber reps on the committee? Should the committee produce a balanced recommendation, will the city council trash it the way it did the short term vacation rental committee recommendations?

One has to wonder what elixir elected officials drink to abandon their base.

Betty Winboltz  
Morro Bay

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**Tidbits** From page 15

also help you recognize and appreciate a deeper understanding of your dog. All of this new information will help make the actual training process calmer and uncomplicated.

When working with, or just hanging out with, your dog, you're probably aware that it is always watching you, anticipating your next move —everything you do, including the way you hold the leash on a walk, serve their meals, guide them out the door, gives the dog information about your attitude, confidence and energy. Be the most calm, confident leader you can be. Your confidence and energy can even help eliminate some degree of leash reactivity!

Include your dog in the family pack as a dog, not a child. Learn about your dog as a dog. Respect that they are still an animal and that they think differently than us.

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Community

Garbage Rates From page 1

MCD that dates back to the infancy of the CSD and the bankruptcy that followed a 2005 recall election. That bit of political theatrics killed the CSD’s community sewer project. It thrust the agency into default of a low interest State Revolving Fund Loan; and violated the Regional Water Quality Control Board’s cease and desist Order from 1988 for which the water board promptly handed down a \$6 million fine (which the bankruptcy court promptly canceled). As part of its bankruptcy, the LOCSD signed over its garbage franchise agreement to the County for use in repaying millions the County had spent on trying to get that sewer project built.

Back in April 2021, the County turned the franchise agreement for Los Osos back over to the CSD to administer but the County had already begun negotiations on this garbage rate hike application, so the LOCSD asked the County to continue with negotiations on its behalf. The LOCSD agreed to repay the remaining \$1.19 million owed to the County stemming from the bankruptcy over a 10-year period, according to Bandov’s report. “Last April [2022] the LOCSD Board of Directors approved the new base rate hike,” Bandov said, “and the current actions is to satisfy Prop. 218 and allow a protest vote of the proposed rate hike.”

Time is Now to Protest

Essentially, all MCD customers in Los Osos proper (Cayucos, Cambria and San Simeon too) should have already received a notice of the rate hike in the mail. Written protests against the rate hike are being accepted now with the formal public hearing slated for Tuesday, March 21 at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

If over 50% of the Los Osos garbage customers oppose the rate hike in writing, then Supervisors would not be able to enact it. Essentially, that would mean the County, LOCSD and the garbage company re-enter negotiations in hopes of coming up with a rate increase that ratepayers will support.

Written protests may be mailed or dropped off in person to: County of San Luis Obispo Administrative Office Attn: Clerk of the Board 1055 Monterey St. Suite D430 San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Rates Outside Cities to Double

But if you think a 41% rate hike is high, be glad you don’t live in the areas between the towns, because their rates will be jumping over 82% for the rest of this year. Bandov told Estero Bay News that the people living outside the jurisdictions of the local CSD are under the County’s franchise agreement with MCD.

Those customers, which Bandov said are not mandated to have garbage service like the town and city dwellers are, will get hit with the 41% base rate hike discussed above, plus a 9.1% inflationary hike; and “temporary short-term rate increase of both due to delayed rate implementation, for a total overall rate increase of 82.22% for solid waste collection services provided by Mission Country Disposal for the unincorporated and rural areas of the County of San

Luis Obispo, effective on February 1, 2023,” reads his staff report.

He acknowledged that 82% is a huge rate hike but noted that 40% of that would end at the end of December. That double hike was granted to MCD because the County took so long to review and approve its rate hike request.

MCD had put in for a base rate hike — which it can do every 3 years — back in October 2021 asking for a 45.93% increase in its County franchise agreement.

A year passed with the two sides going back and forth with requests for information and analyses with the result of MCD reducing its rate hike request to 41.87% and restoring the 7% profit margin allowed under the contract.

But County Public Works decided it wanted an expert to review the negotiations under the franchise agreement and the County hired Bill Statler, who Bandov said is the local expert on these franchise agreements and is the person every jurisdiction in the county hires for such reviews.

Statler’s review confirmed that everything was on the up-and-up and also that due to the lengthy negotiations, MCD was owed the back charges because it continued to provide services when it was technically not under contract.

“Mr. Statler’s report,” Bandov’s report said, “concludes that the requested rate adjustment application is supportable and recommends the requested base year rate increase of 41.87% and a temporary rate increase through the end of 2023 due to the delayed rate implementation with a recovery start date of July 1, 2022.”

So at the end of December, the 82% rate increase will drop back down to reflect the 41% base rate hike plus the 9.1% inflation increase for a total of 50.97%.

So what does this mean in terms of dollars and cents? In rural Los Osos the minimum can size is 32-gallons, which was \$27.97 a month as of the 2021 rates. That cost will jump to \$50.97 as of Feb. 1 and then drop back down to \$43.29 at the end of December.

In rural Morro Bay the 2021 rate for a 32-gallon container was \$15.43 and jumped to \$28.21 on Feb. 1 and will drop back to \$23.88 after Dec. 31.

Rural Cayucos residents will pay these same rates but they are a bit higher for the rural areas of Cambria, San Simeon and Harmony — \$26.14, 47.63 and \$40.45 respectively.

And because garbage service is not mandatory for the areas between the towns, there is no Prop. 218 vote on these rate hikes.

In the towns where the CSD’s hold the franchise agreements, garbage service is mandatory making it a tax and thus giving ratepayers the right to vote in protest against the rate hikes.

Moving Forward From page 1

I needed to preserve that meditative mood I felt seeing an image of my dog CJ singing my song in a David J. Rogers print.

As I continued my stroll in and out of Morro Bay’s downtown merchant center meeting the friendly new owners of The Ugly Mug Ceramics, Tiger Monkey Tattoo, Top Dog Coffee Bar, as well as artists showing at the Morro Bay Art Center, I realized something else — our downtown has a new energy.

Was it wishful thinking? When I asked David Rogers, I discovered his heartwarming “moving forward” story about how the family serendipitously opened their gallery and found their home-studio in Morro Bay.

First, I suggest you go to www.DavidJRogerArt.com. His brief bio states, “...I am a watercolor artist with over 25 years of fine art experience. I spent most of that time traveling the country and attending over 40 fine art shows annually. One day I decided to slow things down a bit and open a studio gallery to share my passion of landscape and seascape art with others. We found that perfect downtown location in the beautiful beach town of Morro Bay, California. I currently host monthly workshops for local artists but want to open that experience to visitors too. I can’t wait to share the beauty of the Central Coast with you!”

Roger’s professional following is significant, attract-

ing students and collectors worldwide — Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia, Hungary, Spain, England, Canada, and Morro Bay. His audience numbers are 146,000 with a subscriber list of just under 85,000. Peggy Rogers, his business partner and wife, remarked, “We have sold literally millions of dollars in artwork over the course of David’s career.”

So, particularly for residents, I wanted to share the Rogers’ Morro Bay “moving forward” story. They hope to meet you when they host the next Chamber mixer at the gallery Wednesday, March 8 from 5:30 – 7 p.m.

The Rogers family lived in Fresno. Twenty-four years ago, they decided art would become their livelihood. David would paint and Peggy would handle operations. Together they would learn the industry.

“Our business has grown organically,” David said. “I’ve been on this path that keeps opening with more to do. At first it was how do I make a living at what I love? I studied how other people were doing it? I painted a few dogs that sold and realized how many breeds there are. Dog print sales built our initial business. We started on eBay and Amazon as a self-represented artist at www.dogprintsgallery.com.”

At one point they displayed at 40 shows a year including the three Morro Bay Art in the Park visits. David expanded his watercolor offerings to feature Central Coast landscapes and seascapes.

“My goal as an artist is that my work will provide a peaceful escape for the soul of the viewer,” David said.

In 2020, COVID-19 shut down travel, so they pivoted to focus on growing their online sales, subscriptions, and workshops. David teaches his unique method of painting based on his book and artist kit, “The Complete Beginner’s Guide to Watercolor Painting.”

“Our demographic for students is female 45-90 years ... feeling their life has not always been what they wanted ... they learn they can create,” said David.

Their business expanded exponentially. They added onto their Fresno home-studio to make room for a shipping operation. It wasn’t enough.

“I had no intention of looking for a place for a gallery, but in Fresno we were busting at the seams,” David said. “I needed a place to support our shipping.”

Browsing commercial opportunities, the couple saw their current Morro Bay space online. They remembered being there and saw potential, but when they called, the owner had already leased it.

“We looked at each other and shrugged ‘It’s the coast.’ And then it was one happy accident after another,” said Peggy. “We dropped by. The owner was there ready to sign the contract. We told her we wanted to open our gallery. She said she preferred the space to be a gallery.

“Everything happens for a reason. Suddenly we were moving, but we didn’t have a place to live. What happened is testimony we were meant to be here. We had a 27-foot travel trailer but no place to park it. Santa Margarita was as close as we could get. We serendipitously walked into Rustic Diamond [in Morro Bay]. Cindy was working the counter. She said she knew someone who had a house but didn’t live in it and maybe she would let us park there temporarily.”



Elizabeth Fletcher had been retrofitting her home for wheelchair access. When they called, she happened to be in town and was literally across the street as they were setting up the gallery.

“She not only agreed we could park our trailer, but gave us access to a bathroom and eventually suggested we stay in the house until she was ready to move in,” Peggy said.

It wasn’t long before Elizabeth moved to town, and they were again essentially homeless with a trailer going back and forth to Fresno.

“Someone through St. Timothy’s Catholic Church,” continued David, “knew Grace Poletti was not using the apartment on her property.” They talked to her grandson, Joey Pettit. “The apartment – decorated with 1970s man-cave décor - needed work, but we got all the stuff out and finally had a home. Joey was a big help.”

Their relationship with the now deceased Grace became their beautiful bonus. Peggy loves to cook and would make extra for Grace, especially her favorites, tuna casse-



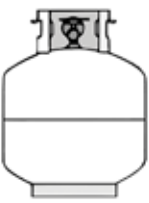
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role, meatloaf, and tacos. Grace was always a people-person – a past Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce Living Treasure.

“Peggy loved being her guardian angel when Grace needed help,” David said,

Peggy and David are now homeowners in Morro Bay and based on the strong family relationship they developed with Joey and Grace, their son, Joe Rogers and his young family also has a Morro Bay home. It is close to the gallery where Joe works weekdays in their family business. He too is an artist focused on creating contemporary stylized artwork.

David addressed my curiosity about Morro Bay’s newfound downtown energy. “My belief is that downtown is ripe with potential. The typical reaction we get from our customers is pleasant surprise, and an appreciation of the small-town vibe, which is different than our waterfront or where they might be traveling from. In fact, here at the gallery we like to refer to the downtown area as ‘Mayberry at the Beach,’ where everyone knows everyone, and we all look out for one another.”

The David J. Rogers Gallery is open seven days a week at 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and located at the corner of Morro Bay Blvd. and Monterey.

Police Chief From page 1

the Citizen’s Academy, Police Chief’s Advisory Board, and mobile phone app [Morro Bay Police Department], among many other initiatives.”

He added, “Chief Watkins has helped train new police officers and sergeants within the department and served on the City emergency team to help aide the City and community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. She also led the department in its response to the recent storm surge emergency in January.”

Chief Watkins had been with the Visalia P.D. for some 20 years before being hired by Cox as second in command.

City Manager Collins said, “I appointed her to the interim role in December after conducting surveys of the Morro Bay Police team and the community. Survey results demonstrated resounding support for the current direction of the police department.” Also, many respondents to an online survey Collins conducted in the search for a new chief, said the City should look within for its next chief of police.

She did well in her short time as interim, including managing police responses during the big storm of Jan. 8-9.

“Amy has performed exceptionally well in the interim role,” Collins said, “and she was recently vetted by a panel of current police chiefs in our county and a panel of Morro Bay community members. There was unanimous support from the panels for Watkins to be appointed to the chief role.

“She is ready to lead the team of talented and dedicated law enforcement and administrative personnel of the police department into the future.”

In accepting the job, Chief Watkins said, “I am honored for the opportunity to serve the dedicated men and women of the Morro Bay Police Department. I am excited to continue to build strong relationships with the community as your police chief.”

Chief Watkins becomes just the second woman police chief in the town’s history and is the ninth police chief (including three interim chiefs) since 2000. She is also the second female police chief named “Amy.”

The swearing-in ceremony for Chief Watkins is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 24 at 10 a.m. at the Morro Bay Vet’s Hall. Members of the public are welcomed to attend.

Meanwhile, Collins himself is slated to leave the City in March and become the executive director for the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo (HASLO).

County Parks From page 1

reation areas at Lopez Lake; facilities at Santa Margarita Lake; and several public access stairways in Cambria and Cayucos.

North Coast Access Damaged

The storms undermined some of the dozens of public access ways in Cambria and Cayucos forcing them to close until repairs can be made.

The damaged access ways are at Lampton Cliff and Wedgewood in Cambria and Mannix and El Sereno in Cayucos, according to Richardson’s report.

“The storm surge,” Richardson said, “removed under footings, railings, and staircase landings. These access way have been partially or fully closed as a result of this damage.”

These aren’t going to be easy fixes. Richardson said, “Staff is assessing consulting services needed to perform services [design, engineering, geotechnical, surveying, etc.] and the most efficient method(s) to secure services [on-call consulting services through other department(s), sole sourcing, etc.]. Staff is investigating the environmental review permitting requirements and the most efficient processes.”

The plan at this rime is simply to close the staircases until they can be fixed. The estimate right now is \$900,000 to fix those mentioned in the report.

The situation is mindful of another access way, at First Street in Cayucos, that washed out in the 1990s and wasn’t repaired until just a couple of years ago.

Situated in the middle of the “Coastal Zone” making even emergency repairs to things like public access stairways can get complicated and take a long time.

Lopez Lake Campgrounds

“On Jan. 9, 2023,” Richardson’s report said, “severe winter storms caused a road embankment of approximately 70 feet to collapse and compromised Lopez Drive near Camp French entrance. Due to the collapse, a sewer pipeline underneath the roadway was exposed and damaged. This service/emergency access road is damaged, and the campground has been forced to close until utility repairs can be completed. The bridge near Black Bear equestrian camp flooded and portions collapsed, making it inaccessible to Camp French.”

The County hired a company, Fluid Resources Management, to operate the sewer system at Lopez Lake and the company discovered another landslide that “compromised the sewage holding tanks.” FRM was able to fix that issue but had to load the sewer flow into tanker trucks and truck the sewage to a treatment plant for some 4 days.

So far the County had spent \$110,000 with FRM and the current estimate to fix the road that slipped is \$1.5 million and completion is expected to be around Oct. 1.

Ironically, Lopez Lake currently is fuller than it has been since before the drought started in 2017 but the public won’t be able to enjoy it much until the repairs are made.

Santa Margarita Lake

The big rains also filled Santa Margarita Lake to some 108% of capacity, which flooded the lake’s campgrounds, destroyed an electrical transformer and shutdown the recreation area until further notice.

The County hired Electricraft, Inc. to assess the damages and come up with a fix. The company also installed a generator and restored power. The current estimate to repair the electrical system is \$150,000 and isn’t expected to be completed until the end of April.

Show Me the Money

So where is the County going to get the money for these fixes? According to Richardson it’ll have to come out of the general fund, subject to reimbursement from the State and Federal Disaster declarations that were made in the aftermath of the storms in December.

Governor Gavin Newsome declared a state of emergency on Jan. 4 and on Jan. 9 he specifically noted San Luis Obispo County among several others up and down the state as especially hard hit.

President Joe Biden issued a federal emergency declaration Jan. 9 opening up federal assistance “to supplement state, tribal, and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from successive and severe winter storms, flooding, and mudslide beginning on Jan. 8, 2023, and continuing.”

The County Emergency Services Director also declared a local emergency, as the bureaucratic paperwork lines up.

Under the law, Richardson must periodically update Supervisors on their progress with the emergency repairs.

County Transportation Plan Lunch

Join League of Women Voters Wednesday, March 8, at noon for “Lunch with the League: A Vision of Future Growth: the 2023 SLO County Regional Transportation Plan.”

James Worthley, planning director for the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) will describe the Plan, which identifies transportation needs and provides a vision for future growth and development in the County through the year 2045. He will highlight the options, strategies, and investments that are being considered.

The presentation is hosted by Kim Murry, co-chairperson of the LWV SLOCO Natural Resources Committee.


Transportation planning is a key component of strategies for growth and development in SLO County. A vibrant economy and sustainable growth depend upon sound and achievable plans to meet the transportation needs of all of our communities and residents. Whether urban or rural, whether motorists, cyclists, or pedestrians, equitable transportation options help ensure our communities can thrive.

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above the kitchen can be used as an office or extra sleeping area for your guests. There is an attached single garage as well as an assigned parking space in this eight condo complex.

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