

City Holds WRF Open House; Celebrates Finish of \$160M Project



City officials and members of the public took tours of the City's new Water Resources Facility treatment plant on Feb. 23, marking the completion and grand opening of the most expensive public works project in town history. Photo courtesy City of Morro Bay

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay residents and City officials celebrated the completion of the Water Recycling Facility Project, marking the milestone in time to meet State deadline to replace its old sewer treatment plant.

An open house and dedication ceremony was held Thursday, Feb. 23 at the project's treatment plant — called the Water Resources Facility — located on a hillside above the terminus of South Bay Boulevard at Hwy 1.

Dignitaries included the Mayor and City Council, as well as representatives from Congressman Salud Carbajal, and State Sen. John Laird, both of whom played an important part in securing low-interest loans for what's billed as the largest public works project in town history.

The City also gave tours of the new treatment facility, which went online in late 2022 and is capable of producing tertiary treated wastewater, suitable for reuse.

Mayor Carla Wixom was excited about the project finally being finished after some 2½ years of construction.

"It's astounding," Mayor Wixom said, "to see the incredible investment that is the new Water Resources Center. As the largest infrastructure investment in City history, this facility is a critical part of providing public services to our community."

The overall project consisted of the new, tertiary level treatment plant with advanced filtering; some 3.5 miles of new collection and conveyance piping; two new lift stations; a bypass sewer main cutting across the power plant from Front Street to Main Street; and a recycled water pipeline that will return the reusable water to injection wells by Morro Creek.

Those wells, which have yet to be installed, though a test well was reportedly successful, will inject the treated wastewater into the underground basin, where it will sit for a prescribed length of time in order to be pumped out again and added to the town's drinking water supply. It's billed as a drought buffer for the water supply.

"The infrastructure program," reads a City news release, "involved replacing the City's existing wastewater

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Moving Forward: Scott Collins: His Message & Our Tribute



Scott Collins was first to say "Love it!" about Morro Bay Maritime Museum's Family Fun Day Blueberry Muffin Contest.

Pictured: Paula Radke donated perpetual trophy; Tourism Board Director Amish Patel, Scott Collins, former City Councilman Jeff Heller and Chamber CEO Erica Crawford offered free tastings of muffins donated by Daisy's Organic Coffee & Tea (winner), Top Dog Coffee Bar, Buttercup Bakery & French Bakery. Also pictured MC Dead-Air Dave and MBMM committee member Kendall Welch. Photo submitted

By Judy Salamacha and
Many Forever Friends

The Scott Collins family is not leaving us as active residents of Morro Bay. He sincerely loves the friends he has made and looks forward to building additional community collaborations benefitting Morro Bay and SLO County. Accepting the Morro Bay City Manager position five years ago was more than a personal career-track-

climb to another city. Morro Bay is where he decided he wanted to live and raise his family. Strategically, he bit the financial bullet and purchased their family home in Morro Bay.

"We need to protect our bird sanctuary," Collins said, "our estuary, our defunct volcano, complete the walkway to Cayucos, and maintain our small business culture. When we really look at what we have all in one place, this is why our people show up

Moving Forward Continued on page 17

New Eateries on the Embarcadero

Story and Photos by Neil Farrell

Changes continue to be made in Morro Bay's culinary offerings, with several new restaurants opening up.

Changes have come in the Downtown and the city's busiest tourism area the Embarcadero, which has seen five new eateries open relatively recently. There's also a future restaurant space under construction now at Harborwalk Plaza.

EBN spoke with some of the owners of the new Water-front establishments that include some Mexican restaurants — both traditional and modern.



Raphael Hernandez and Wendy Morales owners of La Katrina.

La Katrina

Situated in a stand alone building at 500 Embarcadero, La Katrina Mexican restaurant is owned by San Luis Obispo restaurateur, Raphael Hernandez and Wendy Morales, whom readers might recognize for the years she worked at the Hungry fisherman.

Hernandez, Morales explained, owns Pancho's in SLO and La Katrina is his second business venture. Hernandez, when asked if he works at both places, sheepishly nods his

New Eateries Continued on page 18

CEC Says Diablo Canyon Should Stay Open

By Neil Farrell

Not many things can go from pariah to Godsend, but the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant might be one of them.

The California Energy Commission became the latest government entity to agree that Diablo Canyon should stay open to support the power grid's reliability. Diablo Canyon is slated to shutdown when its licenses run out for the Units 1 and 2 nuclear reactors in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

But a growing number of agencies have done an about-face and voted or recommended it stay open for 5-10 more

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Failed Storm Drain was Rusted Away

By Neil Farrell

A failed storm drain along the Embarcadero that caused the roadway to sink revealed a major issue with the old drainpipe, prompting the City to want to take a closer look at the condition of other storm drains in town.

City Engineer Eric Riddiough told Estero Bay News that the storm drain that failed, located just north of the intersection with Beach Street, basically rusted away.

"The corrugated metal storm drain that was uncovered during the construction," Riddiough said, "was found to

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Back Bay Betty
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**Police
Blotter
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the Month
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LOCSD Out for Bids on New Water Main

Los Osos’ first new production water well is getting ready to award a construction contract that will add the water to the Community Services District’s portfolio and take one more step in the battle against seawater intrusion. The LOCSD’s Board of Directors was slated Feb. 28 to approve releasing the bid package for construction of the transmission system for its so-called “Program C Well Project,” that has an overall cost estimate of \$2.6 million. The transmission line (water main) will run from the well site located at Bay Oaks Drive and South Bay Boulevard and tie into the CSD’s water system at Nipomo Avenue and Mountain View Drive, according to a CSD staff report. The CSD has been working on the Program C well for some 5 years now. The well itself has already been drilled and awaits the piping so it can be added to the CSD’s water supply.

It’s the first new well being done under the Basin Plan, which was written to address extensive seawater intrusion into the underground basin that is the sole source of drinking water for all of Los Osos. The CSD is one of three water purveyors, plus SLO County, involved in the basin management efforts.

The idea is to move production further inland and away from the area of seawater intrusion, which roughly stretches from the Back Bay inland along the LOVR corridor nearly to Palisades Avenue.

The transmission line is approximate 3,200 feet of 8-inch PVC pipeline. This portion of the project has already been designed and undergone permitting through SLO County and only needs an encroachment permit to dig up the County-maintained streets in order to move forward.

The design documents, i.e. plans and specifications, were done by Water Systems Consulting under a separate contract and the engineering firm, The Wallace Group, prepared the bid package.

Deadline to bid on the job is 3 p.m. Thursday, March 30. If the low bid comes in within 20% of the engineer’s estimate, the CSD general manager will be able to award it without Board approval.

The construction portion of the transmission pipeline is estimated at about \$964,000 (or somewhere between \$915,000 and \$1.06 million), according to the bid package.

If none of the bids comes in at a reasonable cost, the general manager will return to the Board for direction on where to go from there.

The CSD secured some \$1.5 million in grants for the project, which greatly reduces the cost to CSD ratepayers.

Though it’s just 3,200 feet in length, the new water line will have to cross busy Los Osos Valley Road over to Mountain View and run up to the Nipomo Avenue tie-in or a bit over half a mile.

Council Wants to Revisit the 37-Foot Downtown Height Limit

By Neil Farrell

With some in the community raising objections to a change in Morro Bay’s planning codes for the Downtown Area, the City Council voted to study the issue a bit more.

Last year, the Community Development Department finished work on updating the Zoning Ordinance, the City municipal code that regulates building in town for things like side, front and back yard setbacks, allowable uses, and, in this case, a new height limitation for the Downtown.

Community Development Director Scot Graham told

EBN that the Council “voted to form an Design District Ad Hoc Committee with two council members, two planning commissioners, two Chamber of Commerce reps, and some stakeholders from the community [business owners and regular citizens].”

He added that they had yet to pick the committee members or hold a formal meeting. “We will be working on it over the next couple of weeks,” Graham said.

The Downtown zoning area in this instance runs along the Morro Bay Boulevard corridor from the Roundabout at Quintana Road to Main Street and north to Beach Street. That zoning area is actually smaller than the so-called “Downtown Business District” — used in tracking sales tax receipts — which also extends south to Marina Street and down to Market Avenue.

The issue dates back to at least last October (2022), when the City Council finally got the rewritten Zoning Code, a process that had taken a couple of years to complete. The Council took a final vote on the new rules last November. But right away, there was a problem.

“At the end of the Nov. 22, 2022 Council meeting,” Graham said, “a majority of Council, under future agenda items, requested that the formation of a downtown design district committee be brought back for Council consideration.”

While it wound its way through the City advisory boards, finally being approved by the Planning Commission last September, the former City Council in October changed the height limits from 30 feet to 37 feet for the Downtown Area.

The thinking was that a typical 3-story building would actually go above that 30-foot height due to roof pitches and things like HVAC units on the roof. The 37-foot height limit would allow full 3-story buildings.

The 30-foot limits had been in effect for many years and the concern was that once 37-feet was allowed, it would be allowed to go up even higher with future updates.

Indeed, that’s what’s happened in San Luis Obispo, which is now allowing 5-story buildings — in excess of 50 feet tall — in its Downtown zone.

Right now Morro Bay has just a handful of downtown buildings that are 3-stories, and they are all motels. The newest one would be the Ascot Suites motel on Morro Bay Boulevard at Morro Avenue that was built in the late-1990s.

Each zoning area in town has its own unique codes to follow. For example, the height limit on the Embarcadero is 24 feet, which limits new developments to two stories.

But State Law in some cases dictates things like allowed uses. Indeed, several years ago the State Legislature passed a law that basically eliminated so-called Residential-1 zoning. Under R-1, only single-family homes are allowed.

The State opened that up to include multi-family developments like duplexes, apartment houses, and condos in R-1 zones in a effort to increase housing units in what is arguably the most desirable area to live — a neighborhood of single family homes — in any town.

Used EV Rebate Program Offered

A new rebate program aims to make owning a used electric vehicle easier on the pocketbook but the clock is ticking to take advantage of the program.

Pacific Gas & Electric has nearly \$80 million to handout through its “Pre-Owned Electric Vehicle Rebate Program,” that is “providing qualified residential customers up to \$4,000, when purchasing or leasing a pre-owned EV. The program aims to distribute more than \$78 million to promote the adoption of EVs and make EV ownership more affordable for all customers.”

PG&E electricity customers may qualify for \$1,000 to \$4,000 in rebates under the program, based on household incomes. The program is for purchased or leased EVs and plug-in hybrids. To be eligible, interested customers must

submit applications within 180 days of purchasing the vehicle.

Aaron August, PG&E’s vice president of Utility Partnerships and Innovation, said, “This new rebate program addresses the continued growth of the pre-owned EV market with a focus on making EVs more affordable for all customers throughout our service area. Affordability can be a barrier to EV adoption, and this program will help offset costs for our customers who want to explore pre-owned EV ownership.”

The program is funded by the California Air Resources Board’s “Low Carbon Fuel Standard,” which is “an initiative designed to reduce the state’s greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. PG&E earns LCFS credits for supplying low-carbon fuel in the form of electricity, and re-distributes funds generated from the sale of those credits through customer programs. The Pre-Owned EV Rebate Program has no impact on customer rates.”

“The launch of the Pre-Owned EV Rebate Program,” August said, “directly aligns with our core focus of proactively preparing the grid for electric transportation, increasing access to EV infrastructure, and supporting EV adoption through rates, rebates, tools and education.”

The rebates are but one of several programs PG&E has regarding electric vehicles. Programs currently available are:

- PG&E’s EV Fleet Program — helps customers with medium and heavy-duty vehicles in their fleets to install cost-effective charging infrastructure to save money, reduce tailpipe emissions and simplify maintenance;
- EV Fast Charge Program — PG&E is funding and installing infrastructure at qualifying customer sites to support the expansion of publicly available fast-charging stations for light-duty vehicles; and,
- EV Charge Schools Program — Installing level 2 charging stations at school facilities and educational institutions for staff, parents and students to charge their EVs. “PG&E helps fund the costs of purchasing and installing the EV charging equipment and networking fees at participating schools, as well as ongoing maintenance and operations; with at least 40% of the new chargers located in disadvantaged communities.

The company said nearly 500,000 EVs — one in seven nationwide — have been sold to people in PG&E’s service areas.

The compapny outlined its strategy for accommodating the growing number of EVs in its “Climate Strategy



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News

Report” released in 2022.

The company said it is preparing the power grid “to quickly and safely power at least 3 million EVs — or about 12,000 gigawatts of EV-related electric load. PG&E “is also working to enable 2 million of those EVs to participate in vehicle-grid integration applications, allowing EVs to be a cornerstone of both electric reliability and climate resilience for PG&E customers broadly.”

County to Spend Monies for Road Studies

San Luis Obispo County is spending over \$1.7 million on studies for roads projects including a study of Los Osos Valley Road from Los Osos to San Luis Obispo.

County Supervisors were asked to create five new “capital projects” using some \$1.7 million in funding from the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments using “Regional State Highway Accounts” (RSHA) and “Urban State Highway Accounts” (USHA) monies. The new projects are:

- Los Osos Valley Road Multi-Modal Corridor Study;
- Pier Avenue Multi-Modal Corridor Study;
- Pier Avenue Multi-Modal Betterments Study;
- Countywide Signalization Intersections Modernization; and,
- Dana Elementary Pedestrian Enhancements.

The LOVR money would be increased by \$150,000 for a study that will look at Los Osos Valley Road and all the ways people travel on that main road connecting Los Osos with SLO. The study area spans from Foothill Boulevard in SLO to Pecho Valley Road where it turns towards Montaña de Oro State Park.

One other North Coast project is included in this funding package \$50,000 towards the Cambria Burton Path.

The biggest expenditure is some \$900,000 towards closing a gap in the Bob Jones Trail, a pedestrian and bike path that runs from SLO to Avila Beach.

Second biggest item is \$498,000 for the Countywide Signalized Intersections Modernization.

The money for these new projects and continued funding of existing efforts, is coming from the SLOCOG, a transportation funding agency that distributes tax revenues trickled down from federal and state gasoline taxes to pay for local transportation projects including pedestrian and bicycle paths, as well as road construction and repair projects.

The SLOCOG Board consists of the five County Supervisors, one representative from each of the seven incorporated cities some 12 members in all and one non-voting member from the local Caltrans District Office.

City Wants to Study Transit System



Morro Bay wants to take a new look at it public transit system hoping to land a grant to pay for the work.

The City Council approved applying for a Rural Transit Fund grant for some \$60,000 out of a pool of \$715,000 available in competitive grants distributed by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. That grant program was started in 2016.

“The proposed use of the grant funds, if awarded,” reads a City report, “is to hire a consultant to prepare an operational analysis of the City’s transit system. This analysis would result in recommendations to improve services with the view of making local transit a more viable option for City residents and visitors.”

The study would analyze “new travel patterns of City residents and visitors that began prior to the COVID pandemic and to what extent travel patterns evolved during and after the pandemic. The recommendations would look at short, medium, and long-term opportunities to redefine or modify existing transit services to best match services that meet current demands.”

If the City gets the grant, it will be the second transportation-related issue to come before the Council in recent weeks. The Council in February approved a contract for a project to replace the existing bus shelter in City Park on Harbor Street with a new modern-style shelter, increasing the seating and fixing the sidewalks. It also involves removing two mature trees and replacing them with new ones.

G. Sosa Const., of Santa Maria was awarded the \$368,000 bid for the so-called, “City Park Transit Hub Project.” With contingencies of 10% or some \$36,000, the overall construction budget tops \$404,000 with the overall project costing some \$509,000 including a feasibility study conducted in 2019.

Sheriff's Bust Nets Guns, Drugs, Cash



Items reportedly found during a traffic stop in Nipomo . Photo submitted

County Sheriff’s Deputies arrested two Santa Maria people on various drug and weapons charges following an early morning traffic stop in rural Nipomo.

According to Sheriff’s spokesman Tony Cipolla, at about 5 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, deputies pulled over a suspicious vehicle at Guadalupe Road and Via Concha Road in Nipomo for undisclosed vehicle code violations.

Deputies determined that the man driving and his female passenger “were under the influence of a controlled substance,” Cipolla said.

The driver, identified as Salvador Pompa, 40 of Santa Maria was reportedly a convicted felon, and allegedly “was found to have a loaded, concealed handgun on him,” Cipolla said, adding that the 9 mm pistol was a so-called “ghost gun,” meaning it was made with a gun kit and had no serial number. Deputies also reportedly found a replica of an M4, semi-automatic rifle in the vehicle.

Deputies, upon searching the vehicle, reportedly found a stash of drugs. “Further investigation led to the discovery of large quantities of narcotics in the vehicle,” Cipolla said. “Deputies seized 4 ounces of suspected Methamphetamine, 3 ounces of suspected Fentanyl and a large quantity of suspected Heroin in addition to \$2,700 in cash. The total street value of the narcotics seized is approximately \$18,000.”

The female passenger, identified as Jessika Zepeda, 34 of Santa Maria, was apparently an accomplice.

Cipolla said that Zepeda, “was arrested for conspiracy, possession of a controlled substance, possession of

Sheriff's Bust Continued on page 4

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Diggin’ Deep
Fundraiser Success



A benefit concert was held to help those living in the Vista de Oro neighborhood in Los Osos where 25 homes suffered major damage from flooding and a mudslide during torrential rains in January.

On Sunday, February 26 the community came together with a huge show of support for the victims. Concert co-organizers Gary Freiberg and Paul Irving rallied the community in a big way the concert that raised over \$45,000. The event saw more than 800 attendees throughout the day, each of whom contributed to the success of the event. Since every aspect of the fundraiser was donated, every penny goes directly to the families in need. Local nonprofit People Helping People (PHP) stepped up to accept donations on a tax-deductible basis and distribute it as needed. PHP President Richard Margetson also ran the silent auction, which saw generous bids on every item.



Gary Freiberg and Paul Irving, co-event organizers

The concert featured top local talent - all who donated their time - including B & the Hive, Strange Cake, Carbon City Lights, Zongo All-Stars, and MiniNova - featuring Kenny Lee Lewis from the Steve Miller Band and Scott Martin of WAR. Audio services were donated by Rich Rolson, Tony Esperidion, and David Chock. The South Bay Community Center donated the space and janitorial needs. Los Osos Rotary set up the BBQ and fed the masses. Caliwala Bakery on 3rd Street in Baywood generously fed all the bands and crew. Many local businesses also jumped in to donate food and drink, and volunteers served the eats all day long.

“The fundraising concert was not only a financial success, but also a sign of a strong community working together to support each other,” Irving said.

Donations may still be made through People Helping People, PO Box 6221, Los Osos, CA 93412, and all donation info is available at supportlososos.com.

In Print
and Online
esterobaynews.com

Auto Dismantler
Charged with
Possessing Stolen
Catalytic Converters



Allegedly stolen catalytic converters found at two businesses. Photo Submitted

The Highway Patrol announced the arrest of a South County auto dismantler on suspicion of possessing stolen catalytic converters by a task force formed to address the plague of catalytic converter thefts sweeping SLO and Santa Barbara Counties.

According to a CHP news release, at 8 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, the San Luis Obispo Auto Theft Task Force in coordination with the SLO County Sheriff’s Office, SLO District Attorney’s Investigators, the California Department of Motor Vehicles, and SLO County Code Enforcement served two search warrants — one in SLO County and one in Santa Maria.

The business location, identified as Sammy’s Auto Dismantling, a wrecking yard located on Gasoline Alley on the Nipomo Mesa, and Lua’s home in Santa Maria on West Harding Street.

The CHP said numerous catalytic converters were found at both locations, 14 in all. They also found a U-Haul tow dolly trailer they suspect was also stolen.

Lopez Lua was arrested on suspicion of purchasing stolen catalytic converters. He posted \$80,000 bail bond and has been released pending trial.

Sheriff’s Bust From page 3

a controlled substance for sale, under the influence of a controlled substance and knowingly bringing a controlled substance into the jail.”

Pompa was charged with suspicion of “conspiracy, being a felon in possession of a firearm, carrying a loaded firearm with a prior felony conviction, possession of a controlled substance while armed with a loaded firearm, transportation for sale of narcotics, transport a controlled substance, knowingly bringing a controlled substance into the jail, and several other drug related charges.” Both were booked into County Jail.

Cipolla was alarmed at the amount of the poisonous Fentanyl.

“The amount of suspected Fentanyl seized,” Cipolla said, “potentially could have contributed to thousands of overdose deaths.”



Child Molester Gets
Life in Prison

A convicted child molester was sentenced to spend more than four centuries in state prison for his conviction on 19 counts of sexually assaulting two children and one adult.

District Attorney Dan Dow said Judge Craig van Rooyen sentenced Daniel Ramirezgutierrez, 36, to 435-years to life in prison for his crimes, which were committed in San Luis Obispo and Contra Costa Counties.



Daniel Ramirezgutierrez

At the March 1 sentencing, the judge held a teleconference call with the victims in the case and heard arguments from the prosecutor and defense attorney before handing down the exceptionally long sentence.

“California sentencing law provides lengthy prison terms and life in prison for certain sex crimes committed against children,” the news release said. “Life sentences such as this provide some protection for young children by way of deterring predators from committing these devastating crimes, punishment for the sex offender, and protection for the community at large from these predators.”

District Attorney Dow said, “In San Luis Obispo County, we vigorously prosecute child predators and fully enforce California law to protect children — our most vulnerable citizens. While this long sentence will not undo the harm done to these young people, it does send an unmistakable message that sexual abuse of children is reprehensible and will not be tolerated in our community.”

According to the charging documents released by the D.A., which list 21 counts, Ramirezgutierrez’ two child victims were both under 14-years old and the crimes against the first victim happened between June 29, 2015 and March 27, 2022. He was accused (and convicted) of groping, molesting and raping multiple child victims in SLO County.

In Contra Costa County he was accused of the same acts with a child under 10 between Jan. 1, 2012 and Dec. 31, 2016.

The County Sheriff’s Office, the D.A.’s Bureau of Investigation and the Child Abuse Interview Team worked the case locally in conjunction with the Brentwood Police Department in Contra Costa County. Deputy D.A. Kristin Barnard of the Sexual Violence Unit prosecuted.



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News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Advisory Board
Seats Open

The City of Morro Bay has a few openings on its advisory boards and anyone interested in serving has until the end of March to apply.

The City has an opening on its Citizen Oversight/Citizens Finance Committee and needs an alternate representation for the Commercial Fishermen’s Organization for the Harbor Advisory Board.

Application deadline is March 31 and applications are available by calling the City Clerk’s Office at 805-772-6568, email to: cityclerk@morrobayca.gov. More information is available on the City website, see: www.morrobayca.gov/advisorybody.

The oversight committee tracks expenditures of the Measure Q and E-22 sales tax monies, and the spending on the Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) Project, which is nearing its conclusion.

The HAB advises the Harbor Department on issue related to the harbor, boating and waterfront issues and facilities.

Advisory board positions are in general for registered voters living in Morro Bay except that some seats on the harbor board can be filled by someone living outside of Morro Bay if they meet the qualifications. That would include the commercial fishing representative and alternate.

Council interviews with applicants are scheduled for April 11.

Addis Named Chair of
Select Committees

Central Coast Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay) was recently appointed chairperson of two select commtties by Speaker Anthony Rendon. Addis will lead the Select Committee on Offshore Wind Energy in California and the Select Committee on Serving Students with Disabilities.

“Both committees will focus on policies that need legislative attention and I’m ready to bring a Central Coast perspective and my experience to the work ahead,” Addis said in a news release.

Last December, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) completed lease sales for five offshore wind farm areas on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off central and northern California — three off Morro Bay and two off the coast of Humboldt County.

Addis’ experience as a special education teacher will inform her role on the Select Committee on Serving Students with Disabilities. She holds teaching credentials

in elementary education, secondary education and special education and is fluent in Spanish.

Assembly select committees are authorized for a two-year legislative session. Thus far no one else has been named to the committees. Speaker Rendon will approve the full membership of the committees at a later date.

Poly’s Dean of
Ag to Retire

Andrew J. Thulin, dean of Cal Poly’s College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CA-FES), will retire at the end of the 2023 calendar year.

Thulin, a Cal Poly alumnus, joined CAFES in 1998 as head of its Animal Science Department and has led the college for the last 10 years.

“My love for Cal Poly runs deep, and I am honored to have spent the last 25 years alongside those who work tirelessly to prepare our graduates to address these global issues,” Thulin said in a news release. “I can retire knowing that the future is in good hands.”

During his 25-year tenure, more than \$230 million was raised for numerous new laboratories and the construction of a new Beef Center, Animal Nutrition Center, J & G Lau Meat Processing Center, Oppenheimer Family Equine Center, Boswell Ag Tech Center in the William and Linda Frost Center for Research and Innovation, and the \$22 million Justin and J. Lohr Center for Wine and Viticulture, which has been recognized as the largest donor-funded project in California State University history.

A strong believer in diversity of thought and respect for others, Dean Thulin initiated the college’s first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and has encouraged and funded innovative programs to support first generation and underrepresented minority students.

Poly Named a Top
Producer U.S. of
Fulbright Scholars

Once again, Cal Poly was named a top producer of U.S. Fulbright scholars by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Three Cal Poly faculty were awarded grants for the

2022-23 academic year: Greg Domber, lecturer in the History Department, and Mira Rosenthal, associate professor of English, are teaching and conducting research at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland; and Nishanta ‘Nishi’ Rajakaruna, professor of biology, is teaching and conducting research at North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Domber and Rosenthal are a married couple who met in Poland while pursuing Student Fulbright Scholarships as graduate students. Domber’s research focus is a digital history project to better understand the influences of American exchange programs on Poland’s negotiated transformation away from communism in 1989.

Rosenthal has focused on translating a selection of poetry by Zuzanna Ginczanka, an interwar Polish poet of Jewish heritage who was murdered at the end of World War II. Her work fell into obscurity until the last 10 years. Since then, there’s been a concerted effort to rediscover her poetry and establish her legacy.

The couple has seen some of the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, most notably the Poles’ support of their neighbors. Domber and Rosenthal began volunteering at the Jewish Community Center of Krakow, a group that houses about 350 Ukrainian families and provides access to a food bank.

In South Africa, Rajakaruna embarked on five-week field expedition studying gypsum ecosystems, gave multiple keynote addresses at regional conferences in his field and was awarded for his Exceptional Contribution to Research Excellence from the Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management at North-West University.

Fulbright is the U.S. government’s flagship international educational exchange program. Since its inception in 1946, more than 400,000 participants from all backgrounds and fields — including recent university graduates, teachers, scientists, researchers, artists and others, from the U.S. and over 160 other countries — have participated in the Fulbright Program. For more information about the Fulbright Program, visit <https://fulbright-program.org/>.

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



Greg Domber (center) with family members at the Ko ciuszko Mound in Krakow. Photo submitted



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Community

Back Bay Betty's End of an Era and New Ventures in Love

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

It's the end of an era of sorts for fans of local music on the North Coast. After 12 years of bringing audiences to their feet to groove to the funky blues sound of Back Bay Betty, the group is disbanding. Front woman Linda Martin is leaving the project to pursue new life and creative endeavors.

"I will miss this epic band big time. My life is now moving into the next phase of dream pursuits, including traveling, spending more time with friends and family and investing more creative energy into my acoustic folk duo, Bay Love," Martin said in an email sent to fans of BBB.

In addition to the demands of creating music, rehearsals and shows, Martin has worked at Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center for 33 years as a critical care RN, and works per-diem at the Arroyo Grande Community Hospital in the emergency room. Added to that she is a single mom of two kids and was taking care of her sick mother, who recently passed away.

"As a single parent, prioritizing my two kids along with being a caregiver for my sweet mama has been number one. Family first, always," Martin told EBN. "Finding balance between work and fun has been challenging. After the craziness of the pandemic and my mom's failing health, it's time to take a deep breath and re-prioritize."

Part of that reprioritizing is focusing on Bay Love, the acoustic progressive folk duo Martin formed with her partner Kevin Termunde. The couple have been together for five years after a chance meeting at Libertine Pub in Morro Bay where Martin was scoping out a blues jam for a potential new guitarist.

"I spotted a cute guy hanging out against the wall wearing leather with long hair and earrings," Martin said. "I said to myself, 'He looks like a guitar player.' I approached him and introduced myself, quickly learned that he did indeed play the guitar, but also discovered that he lived in LA at the time, so I was out of luck."

With fate on their side, Termunde moved to the area and happened to be at a BBB gig in Pismo Beach one evening. This time he approached her, and they later started playing together for fun.

As multi-instrumentalists and collaborators, Termunde and Martin write original music and arrange creative covers



Members of Back Bay Betty

of songs by artists such as Bob Dylan, Linda Ronstadt, Joni Mitchel, John Prine, John Lennon, Joan Baez, and many others.

Bay Love also has a 32-song Joan Baez Tribute Show called "The Lady From The House In The Tree (A Tribute To Joan Baez)." The show is named after one of their original songs and can be seen online at BayLove.net.

"We really resonate with Joan's message of non-violence, peace activism, unity and social justice," Martin said. "She lives in Northern California and has had a tree house on her property for many years, hence the title."

The duo was set to take the Joan Tribute Show on tour, but the pandemic put a stop to that, so they improvised with a live stream event from their home studio on Joan's

80th birthday. They had more than 1500 viewers and raised a few thousand dollars for the SLO Food Bank in Joan's honor.

"Fans can now look forward to more opportunities to celebrate one of the most influential musicians on the planet with us live," Martin said.

As the name implies, Bay Love is, in part, about the many shapes, sizes and sounds encompassing love.

"Music is such a universal language, and it brings people together from all walks of life," Martin said. "Kevin and I are both health care providers, and we work closely with people with disabilities as well. We recognize and honor the inherent worth in every living thing. We are trying to do our small part to improve the human experience by promoting connection, creativity, love and caring for the planet and each other."

Although the duo's music is different in style and energy than BBB, Martin says, at the heart of it all, there are similarities.

"That fan energy is going to be hard to duplicate," she said. "The gratification of reaching someone with my music, however, touches my soul the same way when I am on stage in either project. I light up with smiling and clapping from a fan on the dance floor, and I also totally dig the eye contact and knowing nod from a listener in a coffee shop. I get off on positive music that brings people together and delivers a message of hope and love for our people. We call that 'feel good music,' and it imparts feel good energy to both performers and listeners alike, regardless of genre."

Twelve years is a long time to bond as a band with life's ups and downs, tours and recordings. Although Martin is excited about the change in direction with Bay Love, she will miss the boys in the band, so to speak.

"I will miss the close bond I have with the players in the band," she said. "I will miss our band rehearsals at my place. And, I will miss the energy that I receive from our happy dancing fans."

The show is not over just yet for Back Bay Betty enthusiasts the band will play a farewell concert at Sea Pines Golf Resort in Los Osos on July 1 from 2 to 6 p.m. Music is free



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to download at backbaybetty.com, and they will have some free CDs at the concert.

“The band is completely disbanding after our finale concert, but I wouldn’t rule out a reunion show sometime down the road,” Martin teased.

BBB band members, the so-called Betty Boys, will stay strong in the local music scene with various projects as well. For starters, they play together in a Rolling Stones cover band called Tumblin’ Dice.

“Their concerts are always packed with happy smiling dancers who can sing every word of the music — so fun,” Martin said.

Guitarist Rob Espinosa, who has had quite a career playing with many famous people and groups including the San Francisco band It’s A Beautiful Day, plays locally with the group Garden Party and with another Central Coast icon Jill Knight. Drummer Don Utterback and bass player Mark Walters also play with the local band Unfinished With The Beatles. Saxophonist Eric Stever is a “freelancing free-wheeler who could just show up at a venue and sit in with pretty much anyone because he is that good,” Martin said. Matt Vargo, the multi-instrumental sound engineer has his own project called Vargo.

In case fans of BBB were wondering just how many instruments Martin plays, the list is a long one including piano and keys, accordion, guitar, melodica, cajon, bongos, and various percussive hand instruments.

“I want to learn the ukulele and the recorder next,” Martin said adding that “A fun dream would be to take a travel nursing assignment somewhere interesting and play folk festivals and shows with Bay Love on my days off.

To check out the sounds of Bay Love, go to baylove.net or on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.



By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Grant Funding for Diverse Businesses in SLO

Anyone who owns or wishes to start a business in San Luis Obispo can apply for grant funding from the City to reach more diverse customers.

“Focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion can benefit your bottom line while also benefiting the entire community,” said Nestor Veloz-Passalacqua, the City’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager. “All businesses based in San Luis Obispo can apply for this new grant funding opportunity for activities, services, programs or projects that are accessible to all and that have a focus on traditionally underserved, underrepresented or marginalized groups.”

The City of San Luis Obispo is now offering a total of \$150,000 in funding through its DEI SLO Business Grant Program. Applications are due on March 31, 2023 by 5 p.m. and funds will be released to grant recipients in the fall.

Historically underserved, underrepresented, or marginalized communities are groups of people who experience the systematic process of being relegated to the lower outer edge or margin of society economically, politically, culturally, and socially. Marginalized groups were (and some continue to be) denied full participation or representation in mainstream cultural, social, political, and economic activities. Marginalized communities have typically referred to Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQ+, women, low-income, and people with disabilities.

The City’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is partnering with the Office of Economic Development and Tourism to provide financial support to local businesses while also promoting the economic and social well-being of the community through programs that support diversity, create equity, and foster inclusion.

For more information, visit www.slocity.org/Diversity.

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Scarecrow Festival Mixer in Cambria



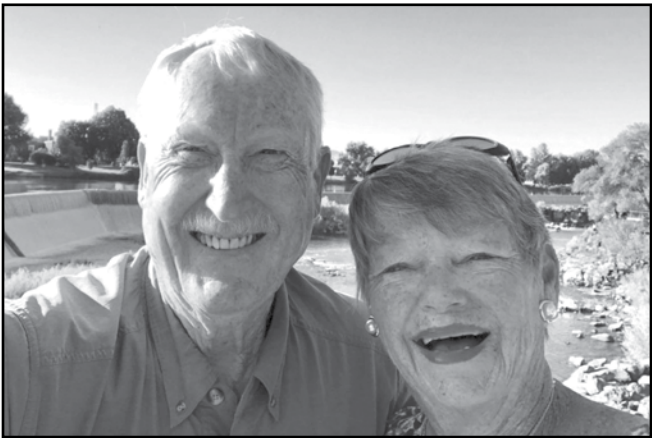
Cambria Scarecrow Festival Festivities are in the Works
Photo Submitted

Mark your calendars. The Cambria Scarecrow Festival Open House & Cambria Chamber Mixer takes place Wednesday, March 22 from 5 to 7 p.m. at 2515 unit K Village Lane in Cambria’s Tin city.

Enjoy a behind the scenes look at where the scarecrow magic begins along with presentations and a peek into the realm of scarecrow creativity.

For more information, go to CambriaScarecrows.com or call 805-395-2399.

Maritime Museum Bench Fundraiser



Red and Gail Davis. Photo submitted

The Morro Bay Maritime Museum is holding a fundraiser with the goal of installing a bench in honor of the support they received from the late Morro Bay City Councilman Robert “Red” Davis and his late wife Gail.

“In Gail’s obituary, the family asked for donations to the museum in lieu of flowers, and the response has been overwhelming,” museum representatives said in their newsletter. “So many people have given generously in Gail’s memory, and we couldn’t be more grateful.”

The museum plans to purchase a bench to be placed in the new section of museum grounds as a tribute to Red and Gail’s support and passion.

To make a donation, go to morrobaymaritime.org and click the big red support button.

Cayucos Chamber Warns About Counterfeit Bills

The Cayucos Chamber of Commerce took to Facebook to warn businesses that counterfeit \$100 bills are making the rounds in Cayucos and other local beach communities.

How to Spot a Counterfeit:

Color-shifting Ink - One of the first things to check is if the bill denomination on the bottom right-hand corner has color-shifting ink. Going back to 1996, all bills of \$5 or more have this security feature. If you hold a new series bill (except for the new \$5 bill) and tilt it back and forth, you can see that the numeral in the lower right-hand corner shifts from green to black or from gold to green.

Watermark - The watermark is a characteristic security feature of authentic banknotes. Many of the new bills use a watermark that is actually a replica of the face on the bill. On other banknotes, it is just an oval spot.

Blurry Borders, Printing, or Text: An automatic red flag for counterfeit bills is noticeably blurry borders, printing, or text on the bill. Authentic bills are made using die-cut printing plates that create impressively fine lines, so they look extremely detailed. Counterfeit printers are usually not capable of the same level of detail. Take a close look, especially at the borders, to see if there are any blurred parts in the bill. Authentic banknotes also have micro-printing, or finely printed text located in various places on the bill. If the micro-printing is unreadable, even under a magnifying glass, it is probably counterfeit.

If you have had bills handed out in your business, contact your local law enforcement.

Brewery Closes One Location — Events planned

Central Coast Brewing is closing their location at 1422 Monterey St. in San Luis Obispo after 25 years. They are holding a few events to say goodbye to their building before moving on to The Hub at 1701 Monterey, their website says.

• March 17 at the old Monterey Street location from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. This is the last call for this location. There will be wall signing, lots of photos and memories, What The Truck will be there all day serving tacos and smoked corned beef breakfast burritos. Events also include Catch 23 re-release and a Bike Sumo grand finale at dusk. For the hearty soles, they will start the day at McCarthy’s at 6 a.m.

• March 18 at the 6 Higuera Street location from 11:30 a.m. 8 p.m. There will be bands all day, weather permitting, celebration of the 25th Anniversary Triple Central Coast IPA, beer games and a Barrel-Aged, Belgian Dark Strong tasting.

• March 19 at The Hub (new location) includes Sunday Fun-Day Beer Bike Ride starting at 10 a.m. This is a super soft opening out in the parking lot with tours of the new facility.

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



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Police Blotter



• **Feb. 26:** Police responded to Morro Bay Boulevard where some 39-year-old fellow was apparently causing a ruckus. He was taken for a 72-hour timeout with County Mental Health.

• **Feb. 25:** Police responded to a disturbance on Quinn Court and contacted some choleric boozy zhlub who was allegedly intoxicated and beating his wife. The tool, according to logs, ripped a cell phone out of her hands preventing her from calling 9-1-1, and also reportedly stopped her from taking their children to safety. The police said there was a suspicion of child neglect. The Piojo of the Year was charged with suspicion of corporal punishment and aggravated assault on his spouse, destroying a cell phone being used to call for help, and child endangerment.

• **Feb. 25:** Police were called to an undisclosed address on Monterey Avenue for a disturbance. Logs indicated a 38-year-old Tin Woodsman was nicked for suspicion of aggravated assault and brandishing a hatchet. He got chopped down to size in the hoosegow.

• **Feb. 24:** Police contacted a juvenile girl on Kings Avenue regarding a report of multiple sexual assaults. Logs indicated she told police that her ex-boyfriend sexually assaulted her 10 times — three times in Morro Bay and seven in Los Osos. Police are investigating the case as statutory rape.

• **Feb. 24:** Police responded to somewhere on Coleman Drive (at Morro Rock?) for a reported rape. Logs indicated the case involved “sodomy by force/violence/fear,” and an arrest is no doubt imminent, with a horse whipping, though

befitting the crime, not an allowable punishment at this time.

• **Feb. 24:** Police took a report of molestation of an apparently unconscious minor at an unknown location, while the perpetrator was apparently acting disorderly, perhaps the understatement of the week.

• **Feb. 24:** Police responded to Del Mar Elementary School on Sequoia St., where some no doubt distracted mom or dad committed crash-n-dash. Logs didn’t indicate a suspect, but by the ‘morrow every kid at school will no doubt know.

• **Feb. 24:** Police contacted a regular customer at City Park and nicked the 53-year-old scofflaw for five failure-to-appear bench warrants.

• **Feb. 23:** Police responded to a suspicious subject on State Park Road and discovered a woman suffering from head injuries and an injured elbow from “unknown circumstances.” The case is being investigated as a battery with great bodily injury and aggravated assault, which there seems to be a lot of that going around these days.

• **Feb. 23:** Someone left a car at Hwy 1 and San Jacinto Street and police towed the apparently offensive vehicle away for an expired registration.

• **Feb. 23:** Police contacted a 63-year-old wanted woman somewhere on Quintana Road who had a bench warrant. She was issued a second disappearance ticket and loosed back into the wild.

• **Feb. 22:** Police responded to the front of the police station after some apparently crazed woman twice rammed her car into the stationhouse doors, no doubt seeking drive-thru justice. Police are charging her with suspicion of felony vandalism of public property and placed her on a 72-hour mental health hold. Hopefully they took away her car too.

• **Feb. 22:** Police responded to the Embarcadero for a reported shoplifting. According to logs, the alleged thief walked into Under-the-Sea Gallery store, grabbed several

items and brazenly walked out the door with four pairs of stolen pants. No arrest was noted in logs.

• **Feb. 22:** Police contacted a suspicious yahoo in the 500 block of Quintana Rd. Logs indicated the 48-year-old model citizen was caught with suspected illegal drugs in his possession, along with illegal drug paraphernalia. He was also charged with allegedly trying to destroy evidence, something that’s no doubt understandable for a nicked drug addict to want to do.

• **Feb. 22:** Police caught an apparent case of crying wolf after a woman on Jamaica Street repeatedly called 9-1-1 with apparent false alarms. Logs indicated she was given a mental health day or two off with the County.

• Feb. 21: Police contacted a local idler at a shopping center in the 700 block of Quintana who had an invite to tea with the judge. He was taken to the Parkinson Plaza to freshen up before seeing Lady Justice, who may be blind but can still smell.

• **Feb. 20:** Police responded to a business in the 100 block of the Embarcadero for a report that someone apparently rented an electric bike and liked it so much they decided to keep it, a little ditty they call grand theft.

• **Feb. 20:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at Beach and Main for several undisclosed code violations. The driver, 20, was given a sobriety test, which he apparently failed miserably and was arrested on suspicion of driving stoned on drugs.


• **Feb. 20:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow somewhere on Main Street. The 30-year-old apparent ghost had four bench warrants. Police took him to the stationhouse where they issued another summons to appear and let the idjit go, no doubt part of the catch-and-release job security program.

• **Feb. 20:** Police responded to Elm Street where they took a report of yet another hit-n-split crash. No injuries were reported but no doubt the car will never be the same.

• **Feb. 19:** Some unknown, apparent bad Samaritan called in criminal threats to Morro Bay High School.

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Morro Bay Mock Trial to Represent County at State Finals – Funds Needed

The Morro Bay High School Mock Trial Blue Team in the SLO County Superior Courthouse where the trial that takes them to state finals. Pictured back row: Vivi Alvarez, Eli Waldman, Rae Ruane, Dan Clement (coach), Reese Demarest, Orion Rae, Noah Cuarenta, Bill Powell (coach), and Curtis Bradley (coach). Front row from left to right: Christine Dietrick (coach), Karen Lun, Angie Molina, Madi Alvarez, Wafa Bhatti, and Josh Waldman (teacher-coach) Photo submitted

For the first time, Morro Bay High School won the county mock trial competition by defeating Mission College Prep on Thursday, February 16. The team went 6-0 in county competition, improving upon their previous all-time best of second place in 2021-22.

Mock trial is an extracurricular, academic competition where students work with local attorneys and other skilled community members to develop both sides of a criminal trial. The Constitutional Rights Foundation creates the


case materials and rules, and attorney John Fricks organizes the tournament in San Luis Obispo County. This year’s case, People v. Jordan Franks, involved an actor charged with robbery and battery after being involved in a confrontation with a co-star onboard a cruise ship.

The students of the Morro Bay Blue Team will travel to Los Angeles from March 17-19 where they will compete in the California State Mock Trial Finals against 34 other county high school champions. The winner of the State

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8 March 9, - March 22, 2023 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News

Morro Bay Mock Trial is coached by attorneys Dan Clement, Christine Dietrick, Gary Ottoson, and Bill Powell. Cal Poly graduate Becca Goren, current Cal Poly student Yuval Shemesh, and MBHS graduate Curtis Bradley assist in coaching. Morro Bay teacher Josh Waldman is the teacher-coach.

“This important event serves our museum’s mission, to remember and educate,” said Bart Topham, president of the Central Coast Veterans Memorial Museum and a Vietnam

For inquiries, contact the County of San Luis Obispo Veterans Services Office at (805) 781-5766 or by email twthinfo@co.slo.ca.us.

• • •

Deetjen's Closet

A Quest for Magic

Debbie Hebbel Black

Community

is the first book in the series Sara and the Ghost Clothes. Book 2, "McMenamin's Closet," is scheduled for release in October.

...

The following programs are presented by the Cayucos Library, located at 310 B St. in Cayucos. Contact the library at (805) 995-3312 for more information, or go to www.slolibrary.org. All programs are free to attend.

- Cover-to-Cover Reading Program: through April 15. Read five books and get a free In-n-Out hamburger or cheeseburger! Visit the library to pick up a reading log. Each child can receive up to three coupons. Ages 4-12.
- Storytime: Every Wednesday at 10 a.m., join in for stories, songs, rhymes and finger-plays.
- Book of the Year: Visit the library to pick up a complimentary copy of their book of the year, "All My Rage." It is a contemporary fiction focusing on two Pakistani American teens, Salahudin and Noor, and their experiences in the small town of Juniper, California. This annual literary program is hosted in partnership with Cuesta College.

Booked for Lunch: Second Fridays at noon. Tell us about your favorite books you have read this month. Everyone is welcome.

...



On Mar. 16, internationally renowned musician and performance artist Dorian Wood presents a 12-hour composition and art installation at Cuesta College in collaboration with the Harold J. Miossi Art Gallery and the Cultural & Performing Arts Center (CPAC).

Wood (pronouns: she/her/they/them) is a multi-disciplinary artist based in Los Angeles. Using subject matter informed by their own perspective as a genderfluid brown person, a child of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan immigrants, and an autodidact, Wood's intent of "infecting" spaces and ideologies with their artistic practice is born from a desire to challenge traditions and systems that have contributed to

the marginalization of people.

Canto de Todes, Spanish for "Song of Everyone," is inspired by a lyric by the late Chilean singer/songwriter Violeta Parra. The work is divided into three movements – the first and third movements are one-hour-long chamber pieces influenced by folk, popular, and experimental music. The second movement is a 10-hour pre-recorded piece unfolding throughout multiple spaces. The Los Angeles Times describes Wood's work as featuring "layered vocals that can be at turns cacophonous and haunting."

Canto de Todes unifies Wood's multidisciplinary strengths to create a community-oriented project exploring the potential of music as a conduit for social change. It upends the expectation of the rigidity often associated with witnessing chamber music performances by offering a welcoming space that allows individuals to project their personal, communal joys and traumas. It is a collaborative work with local artists who are invited to permanently incorporate their respective visions into the body of this evolving piece.

Canto de Todes is presented on Thursday, Mar. 16, in three movements:

- Movement I | 9:00 – 10 a.m. | CPAC Experimental Theater
- Movement II | 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. | Harold J. Miossi Art Gallery
- Movement III | 8 – 9 p.m. | CPAC Experimental Theater

Admission to this event is free. Go to cuesta.edu/student/campuslife/artgallery/ or call (805) 546-3202 for a schedule of exhibits and hours of operation. *Image courtesy of Dorian Wood.*

...



Join Cambria Center for the Arts for Refreshments and Art. "Finding the Light" features internationally shown artist Liz Hampton-Derivan. Her delightful and unexpect-

ed imagery includes mixed media, photography, hot and cold wax, paints and pastels. The exhibit runs through April 30. Gallery hours are Fri-Sun 12 to 4:00 p.m. More information is at <http://www.cambriaarts.org>.

...

Cambria Center for the Arts has a call to artists for their Spring Juried Photography Exhibit with juror Kerry Drager.

To register/submit art online through April 17-21 and for information, go to cambriaarts.org/cc-a-artists

...

Anne Grannis is the Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., featured artist through April 23 with open hours 12-4 p.m. daily. Anne loves creating art from stone carving, pastel painting and fabric. She has taught clay sculpting since she was a young girl. Her sense of whimsy prevails in her popular dream boxes and her figurative sculptures are the very shape of intimacy, created from live models.

Whether you are attending this free exhibit to observe or to find that perfect painting for yourself or as a gift, you're in for a delight. For more information, contact Art Center Morro Bay at (805) 772-2504, artcenter.morrobay@gmail.com or www.artcentermorrobay.org.

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Join Saturday Seed Talks Garden Series: Oak and Acorns As A Staple Food at the Morro Bay Library, 625 Harbor St., on Saturday, March 11 from 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. During this free event learn about the mighty oak, the local, dominant tree species, and how the edible acorn is used in cuisine and culture.

Presenter Jesse Trace has a background in sociology and sustainable development and is passionate about agro-ecology and ethnobotany.

On Saturday, March 18 from 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. check out the Piedras Blancas: Elephant Seal Seasons of The Year.

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March 19, 2023
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Join the Friends of the Elephant Seals for a dynamic slide and video presentation of the seasons of our Central Coast elephant seals.

All library programs follow current California and County of San Luis Obispo health guidelines. These two programs are recommended for adults.

...

The following are free events brought to you by the Morro Bay Library 625 Harbor St, (805) 772-6394. All library programs follow current California and County of San Luis Obispo health guidelines.

• **Paws to Read** - Wednesdays, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Come and read your favorite book to Billie the corgi! She's at the Morro Bay Library on Wednesday afternoons. School Age.

• **Storytime** - Tuesdays, 10:30 - 11 a.m.
Stories, dance, and music for toddlers and preschoolers.

• **HexBugs** - Wednesday, March 22, 3 - 5 p.m.
Create mazes for these motorized bugs! All ages welcome.

• **New Life K-9's** - Saturday, March 18, 2023, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

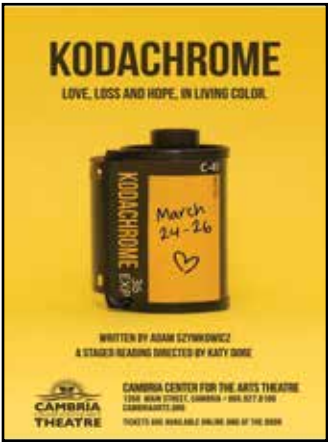
New Life K9s trains and places service dogs with veterans and first responders with PTSD. Meet the handlers, and dogs to learn about this great program. Free to the public.

...

Cambria Center for the Arts Theatre presents "Kodachrome," its first Readers Theatre program for the season March 24 through March 26.

"Kodachrome," written by Adam Szymkowitz, is the story of a small town told through the lens of the local photographer, who lets us peek into her neighbors' lives to catch glimpses of romance in all its stages.

"Her camera and her stories capture moments in the lives of the town's denizens, including the hardware store owner who hasn't healed from the death of his wife, the lonely but unfailingly optimistic Florist, the young woman who has no idea what she really wants, and the waitress whose daily routine has been exactly the same for the past 20 years," said the publication Broadway World. "Put together, these moments encapsu-



late what it is to be a person navigating the rocky waters of love. There are some surprises along the way, but most of the characters' struggles, hopes, and fears will likely feel familiar, because they're your struggles, hopes, and fears as well. It's tender and poignant and awkward and funny all at the same time - you know, just like life."

The staged reading is directed by Katy Dore, an accomplished actress/writer/film director and producer. A short film she wrote and directed, "Odd Bird," was screened at a previous Cambria Film Festival.

Performances are at 1350 Main St in Cambria and run March 24-26, Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are available online at Cambriaarts.org or at the door. All seats are reserved.

...

Win a Dream Trip from the Rotary Club of Cambria. How does a vacation on the beach in Bermuda, Los Cabos, Cancun or Costa Rica sound to you? Or a trip exploring the beaches and jungles of Belize or a wine train and hot air balloon ride in Napa Valley? Maybe checking out the Kentucky Bourbon Trail or New York's Broadway are more up your alley. Whatever your preference, it's time for Cambria Rotary's Grand Raffle. Enter to win one of eight travel experiences. The winner will be drawn at their VIVA event "Spring Fling" on April 29, but the winner does not need to be in attendance to win. Purchase tickets for \$50 from any Cambria Rotarian or email them more information at vivacambriarotary@gmail.com. Proceeds will help fund local and international projects including feeding the needy, polio eradication, disaster relief, basic education and literacy, high school scholarships, promoting peace, sustainable clean water and much more.

...

Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main Street, presents Capturing the Essence of Nature, a 3-day, soft pastel workshop, with award-winning artist Greg Trombly March, 24, 25 & 26 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Focusing on basic composition, drawing techniques, color and value, this course is designed to provide hands-on guidance to students in a relaxed atmosphere. Students will learn how to incorporate contrasting shadows cast from sunlit skies along various rocky shorelines, to fields dotted with floral wonder. Trombly will provide an introduction to pastels, surface varieties and how to choose subject matter.

Students are encouraged to bring a reference photo of a flowery field, a sunset and/or shoreline, for these classes. Images are available upon request. This workshop is designed for beginner to advanced.

Trombly will give a free demonstration of pastel



on March 13 from 3-5 p.m. at Art Center Morro Bay. If you're not sure if this workshop is for you, get a free introduction by attending this exciting demo.

The cost for the workshop is \$165 members and \$175 non-members Pre-register at <https://artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/shop/>. For more information, call 805-772-2504 or go to www.artcentermorrobay.org.

Image is copyrighted and courtesy of Greg Trombly.

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

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Obituaries

Rita McCallum



Rita McCallum a beloved matriarch and community figure known for her dedication to education has passed away peacefully in her home on February 16, 2023.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Rita’s family moved to California at a young age and she graduated from Mt. Diablo High School and San Jose State University. After college, Rita became an elementary school teacher for more than 20 years.

In 1977, Rita and her husband, Jim, moved to Morro Bay. There they founded the Estero Bay Day School. For the next 20 years, they dedicated their lives to educating and nurturing countless children in the community. She was remembered by many as going above and beyond as an educator through gifts of kindness, being fair, and making sure every child felt special.

In addition to her work as an educator, Rita was an active member and past president of Quota International for over 40 years. Quota is an international service organization that provides aid to women, children and the hard of hearing.

Rita impacted the lives of so many people around her, and her memory will live strong in the hearts of those she touched. She will be deeply missed by her husband, Jim McCallum; her daughters April Hendricks (Danny Smith) of Arroyo Grande, Laura Rianda (Terry) of Nipomo, Lisa Rogers (Scott Vickery) of Northern California; her sons Mark Rogers (Kim Stahl) and Gary McCallum of Nipomo, her grandchildren Chris Rogers (Stacey Barker) of Austin, Texas, Rodney Tindall (Jen Uzonyi) of Arroyo Grande, Ashley Tow of Solvang, Chelsea McConnell (Chris) and Chloe Rogers of San Luis Obispo. Survived by her pride and joy, great-grandchildren Parker, Zane, and Elias,

May she rest in peace and her legacy flourish while continuing to inspire others to make a positive difference in the world. A celebration of her life will follow.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to Quota International of Morro Bay so they may continue to do the great work our mother was so proud to be a part of.

Betty Louise Carleton (Mahin) 1937 - 2023



Betty Louise Carleton (Mahin) passed away on January 19, 2023. Betty was a very positive and encouraging person. She was beloved by her family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. She will be deeply missed. She was called an angel by neighbors and friends because of all she did for them on a regular basis. She loved working on her roses and toiling in her garden. She liked swimming a couple days each week at the Sinsheimer Pool in SLO. She also enjoyed attending the Baywood Park Community Church. Her happiest moments in life came from spending time with her family.

Betty was born on 6/22/37 in New Jersey to Stephen and Donna Carleton. She has one brother named Scott. They got along well, and were close growing up. Betty grew up in Teaneck, NJ and moved to Oradell, NJ in 1951. She graduated with honors in 1955 from Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, NJ. She went to college at Brown University and graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 1959. She then went across the country to attend the University of Washinton graduate school for her master’s degree in English. After that she taught English & Literature at Seattle Pacific University.

She married Allan S. Baillie, a Boeing engineer, in June 1961. They moved to New Orleans in 1963, Southern CA in 1965, Seattle, WA in 1968, Spokane, WA in 1971, Costa Mesa, CA in 1976, Olympia, WA in 1977, and, finally, Los Osos in 1978. During those years Betty and Al had five wonderful children. She got divorced in 1979 and began working at Wells Fargo Bank, which later became Mid-State Bank. She worked there for more than 20 years.

Betty got remarried to Lynn D. Mahin in 1981. They took many trips across the country in Lynn’s motorhome and personal plane to visit friends and relatives. Betty loved walking and spending time with her dogs Buttons, and River. She adored and spoiled her 10 grandchildren with Easter games, Halloween costume parties, Thanksgiving gatherings, and Christmas celebrations. She enjoyed cheering on her grandkids at softball or baseball games, soccer


games, swim meets, basketball games, tennis matches, and track meets. She also took them to swimming lessons and diving lessons. She loved attending Baywood Park Community Church family activities like the Awana Grand Prix night, the yearly church picnic, and the Christmas Eve service.

Betty moved to Georgia in July of 2022 so she could be near her brother, Scott, who was in a memory care facility. She died at her home there on January 19, 2023. She is survived by her five children: Karen Calderwood (husband Dean), Donna Langford, Allan Baillie Jr. (wife Jennifer), Stephen Baillie, Alexander Baillie; and her 10 grandchildren: Rachel, Andrew, Nellie, Gavin, Haley, Alexander, Allison, Katherine, Rebecca, and Allan.

A memorial service for Betty will be held on Saturday March 25, at 2 p.m. at the Baywood Park Community Church, 1436 11th Street in Los Osos. Pastor John Tiffin will officiate the service. All who knew her are welcome to attend and remember her.

OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS



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

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

Walking Montaña de Oro, Point Buchon

By Susan Vasquez

I've been hoping for a lot of things lately. Hoping to make plans that don't need constant revision. Hoping for new places to go. Hoping for more walks that take me long into the hills or along the beach through the dunes. Longer walks that stretch my calves and work my lungs and teach me to breathe. I like stability and routine, but sometimes a little change helps everything in life.

Just around the corner is a place that gives the possibility of a longer walk. Montaña De Oro State Park lets everyone ramble however they want. There are crushed granite trails, asphalt



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Community

Letters To The Editor

trails, trails along the edge of the ocean and ones straight up mountains. The path south along the coast toward Point Buchon, way in the distance, calls to me. I haven't yet walked it.

The trail winds its way, out there beyond where I have ever been, a trail that runs up the hill, around the bluff, and disappears into that softly turquoise sky. In the spring, the long path is a warm earthen line between mint-colored grasses with occasional gold from poppies or goldenrod wild flowers. I see it from a distance. The path invites me like all those routes that wait impatiently to be walked, while I test out my footwork and the strength of my laces or the time until my next obligation or whatever else is keeping me from setting out for a long stroll.

It's a good challenge. The curve of the pathway is so far off it disappears from view, marking the spot that is probably half-way to the point where I plan to turn around. Some walks that I've never taken, like this one, I think about and design a route and re-think and design again until I can put foot to path. The road will be similar to others I have taken but not exactly the same. I know the trail will be a worthy one, if only for the freshness of the air.

Our lungs know what is good for them, and this air is their dessert. Deep breaths are on the menu. Replenish your lungs, relax your mind, calm your heart with those long measured breaths. Good health waits for me on the long walk into the hillside along the Montaña De Oro ocean cliffs. Shorter walks around the area have taught me what I might expect on a longer hike. Seven miles, eight, maybe nine or ten by the time I take the return trip. What's keeping me from this long walk?

I've been reaching for a more demanding work-out inside my walking self-therapy. We all get into times when we have too much sameness. The same wake-up time, the same breakfast, the same walk every day. All of that is good, but there is also goodness alongside a challenge. I have held onto this quest to take a long walk for quite a while. It's a forever to-list that hasn't been done. Is there a rush? Do I need the pressure of a mental reminder that I have a goal I haven't reached?

One step after another – this philosophy makes my life simpler, and when I remember it, it makes my life better. But sometimes the simple way of looking at things needs a second look. Sometimes, life isn't simple. Right now, as I plan that long, long walk, my heart says 'go', but my hip says 'no'. That's when I have to remember that even many small walks to long places will get me there, eventually.

Susan Vasquez has taken walks in many of the world's most interesting spots, but especially enjoys her strolls around Estero Bay. She is the author of four books and blogs at One Small Walk, and is a member of the Bookshelf Writers, four Estero Bay women whose writing can be found at <http://www.thebookshelf-writers.com>



Garbage Rate Hike Confusion

I am confused about the article [Garbage Rates Set to Jump. Vol. 5, Issue 4] you posted on 2/23/23 regarding the proposed increase in garbage rates in Los Osos. The article states that the increase would be 41%.

The notice we received shows that our half can rate will go from \$17.80 to \$34.94. That is almost double.

Other media reports are noting the doubling of the rates, as well, such as KSBY and CalCoast News.

Thank you for a clarification.

Petra Clayton
Los Osos

Get the Facts

Please state facts correctly otherwise it is misleading.

Page 1. Los Osos customers are looking at 97.61% increase not 41%.

Page 2. Supervisors (as a plural) did not turn down a raise. The headline is misleading and does not give credit where due The credit does not go to Gibson and Legg. The headline is what people are going to remember. The headline correctly is a majority of supervisors turn down raise.

James D'Albro
Los Osos resident

EBN Clarification

The short explanation: Should the Board of Supervisors not receive letters of opposition to the rate increase from more than 50% of Los Osos garbage customers by the March 21 hearing, there will be a temporary increase in trash rates of about 97% that will run from the end of April through December. That rate will then drop to the base rate increase of close to 42% plus inflation.

Mission County Disposal submitted a base year rate application for 2022 on October 18 of that year for an increase of 41.87% for all solid waste customers.

"The total proposed rate increase will be effective on April 1, 2023 and is based on the 2022 Base Year rate increase of 41.87%, the 2023 Interim Year rate increase for Consumer Price Index, and the temporary short-term rate

increase that expires on December 31, 2023," reads the Board of Supervisors report.

For customers within the LOCSD boundary,

- On April 1, 2023, the overall rate increase will be 97.61%
- On December 31, 2023, the temporary rate increase expires, and the overall rate increase will reduce to 49.57%

The base rate "inside the services line for the LOCSD" is going up 41+%; plus add in an inflation rate increase of 7.7%; and back charges for the delay in getting the rate application processed and the immediate overall rate hike is over 97% — nearly double.

At the end of December, the increase for the delay drops off and goes back to the base rate plus inflation.

Tour the Water Resources Center In Morro Bay

The initial public tour of the new Water Resources Facility in Morro Bay was amazing. On this hillside setting, geologists, hydrologists and construction professionals have built a water-purifying factory that will provide clean water for generations to come. Experts from the facility described in layman's terms how dirty water can be made clean, eventually clean enough for all the things we need water for, including for our own consumption.

The people who worked to make this happen and those whose job it is to keep it running are very invested in their roles--obvious by the way they showed us the components and described the intricate, highly monitored processes, and by the way they entertained questions. The facility was decked out to welcome visitors with activities and refreshments and especially by the orderly and informative tours.

The plant was put into operation in October and by January 9 the plant itself had already proved its value. It literally saved the city from public health and ecological disaster. The old plant was inundated by stormwater, but the new facility processes worked as designed. Estimates are that the city of Morro Bay would have been releasing untreated sewage directly into our ocean waters for a month or even longer.

The tour provides an opportunity to see first-hand what forward-thinking, competent leaders were able to bring to the city. Additional tours will be available due to citizen input and interest. School field trip tours will also be made possible.

Bob and Carol Swain
Morro Bay

Letters Continued on page 14

THE FINALE

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- Viewpoint -

SLO COUNTY ANIMAL ADOPTION FACILITY IS OPEN AND NEEDS YOU

If you haven't been in to see the brand new San Luis Obispo County Animal Services adoption facility yet, then you don't realize what you're missing out on! Not only is the new facility itself amazing, but so are all the different animals who use it as their temporary home, and of course just as amazing are their human caretakers who are the committed staff and team of volunteers.

Spring is right around the corner, and in these post-COVID days the animal count is way up at the shelter. It's not just dogs and cats that are available to be adopted. If you keep an eye on the Animal Services website somewhat often you are likely to find everything from reptiles like bearded dragon lizards, to chickens or ducks, rabbits and guinea pigs, birds, you name it! If it's considered "domesticated" then Animal Services is likely to have it at some point. By adopting from the shelter, not only are you helping give a homeless animal a great home, the adoption prices are a huge savings compared to going anywhere else!

Of course, the average adopter comes to see dogs and cats the shelter has to offer. It almost always seems to be dog and puppy season with an ever-changing supply available, and major kitten season is right around the corner when the numbers can really spike. This is where the team of staff, volunteers and fosters kicks into high gear to help care for all these animals. You can help too by signing up online to become a kitten foster, or by calling the office at 805-781-4400. If you want to do even more you can become a regular volunteer and have a wide range of hands on tasks working directly with the animals of your choice, all while making your own schedule for shifts. It's so much fun and the ultimate reward is watching an animal go home with its new family! You can sign up for being a foster or volunteer by visiting the Animal Services website online at <http://bit.ly/3XQMrUz>.

A common question the shelter is asked is, "How long do the animals have to be adopted?" Fortunately, the shelter NEVER has a time limit on the length of stay for any animal. Some animals are at the shelter for months until they find the right match. This is where the team of staff and volunteers working hard together plays such an important role by keeping all of the animals happy, trained, and cared for. As a result the shelter is proud of their very high "live outcome" rate year after year, which in 2022 was 94%, (90% is generally considered no kill status for a shelter).

So if you haven't seen the new shelter yet, or you have been holding off on adopting your next dog or cat or other little critter, or maybe you'd like to check out the facility because you're interested in volunteering, then stop on by SLO County Animal Services at 865 Oklahoma Avenue, which is right off of Highway 1 at the traffic light for the Sheriff's Department. The shelter kennels are open to the public Monday thru Saturday from 1-5 p.m. and until 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Available cats can be visited during regular office hours which are posted on the website. Of course you can always do an internet search on the shelter to see and view available animals in the facility, including all strays who have come in at <https://24petconnect.com/SLOC-Adopt>. You can also check out more info and available animals with bios on the shelter's Twitter or Facebook page, and another FB page called SLO Lucky, which is operated by volunteers. It's all one big team effort in the name of the animals, finding homes for them all! Come say "hi." The animals will love to see you!

John Zweemer
Los Osos

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



Soccer, Hoops Stars Are February Athletes of the Month

The Morro Bay High School Athletic Booster's Club announced its Athletes of the Month for February 2023, honoring more of the winter sports standouts, as the season winds down.

"The MBHS Athletic Boosters would like to thank and congratulate every coach and player for representing our school," reads an announcement from the Booster's Club. "You've made us proud. The time, effort, and sacrifice you made during this season brought about some wonderful memories and results! Job well done, Pirates!"

The student/athletes honored for February 2023 are Justin Campbell, Samantha Rivera, and Danny Martinez.

Campbell and Martinez are members of the Boys' Basketball Team.

Coach Kevin Russell said, "Justin's dedication and work ethic has been tremendous. He never misses a day and is always working to perfect his craft. It was a pleasure having Justin this year and he is a huge asset to our program."

Martinez he said, "Is a leader by example who never complains. His 'yes coach' attitude set the tone every practice. Danny is a selfless teammate who will do whatever it takes to win!"

Varsity Girls' Soccer Coach Kim Wishon expressed



Danny Martinez

pride in Rivera. "Sam," Coach Wishon said, "was chosen by her teammates to lead the Pirate squad as a captain this year and she has whole-heartedly stepped up to the challenge."

"She leads by example and is a rock solid part of our offense and defense with five assists and one goal over the season. Sam brings a calmness to the field by juking players right and left and then making the perfect pass through to the forwards."

Rivera "is a trusted part of the defense always with great positioning and clearing the ball when needed," Coach Wishon said. "Sam was a big contributor to our success as a team this year coming in second in the Ocean League, which was the best winning season the Pirates have had in 20 years! Sam is a leader on and off the field and will be dearly missed by her teammates and coaches next year."

Estero Bay News joins the Booster's Club in celebrating the accomplishments of MBHS's student athletes; and congratulates all of MBHS winter sports' coaches and players.



Samantha Rivera

23rd Citywide Yard Sale set for March 24-26

The Morro Bay Citywide Yard Sale Weekend is fast approaching and if readers want to get in on the action, they can register their own yard sale on an event map.

The 23rd Annual City Wide Yard Sale Weekend is set for Friday-Sunday, March 24-26 at locations scattered throughout the community.

Sponsored by Visit Morro Bay, past events have had more than 100 yard sales featuring just about every kind or fashion of treasured junk imaginable.

Sellers can have their addresses listed on the Yard Sale Map, with the deadline to sign up 3 p.m. Friday, March 17. Email to: liz@morrobay.org to register a yard sale.

The non-profit, the Morro Bay Active Adults (formerly MB Seniors, Inc.) is the featured organization this year and the organization's sale will be at the Community Center on Kennedy Way.

If readers would like to donate "gently used" items but not hold a sale themselves, they can donate them to the MB Active Adults. Suggested items are jewelry, puzzles, cell phones, tablets and art of any kind. They can't take large items like furniture and will be accepting donations Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 8-3.

The "Digital Yard Sale Treasure Map" will be available



on Monday, March 20, see the website at: www.morrobay.org/Events. The printed maps are also available at the Active Adults' sale and from the Chamber of Commerce, 695 Harbor St., starting Friday, March 24 from 9-11 a.m. and Saturday, March 25 from 8-10 a.m.

Most yard sales run from about 8 a.m. to around 3 p.m. though times for particular sales will vary.

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KEVIN O'CONNOR, President

Failed Storm Drain From page 1

With all the red flowering eucalyptus trees that line the Downtown streets and the leaf and seed pod litter they



Workers with N. Brent Knowles Construction of Cayucos work on a failed storm drain on the Embarcadero. Photo by Neil Farrell

The City had initially estimated \$30 million in losses from the big storm of Jan. 8-9 that flooded about a square mile of the City along Main Street from Radcliff to Atascadero Road and up Atascadero Road towards the beach. The City Maintenance Yard and old sewer treatment plant were flooded in that big storm when Morro Creek overflowed its banks. Several pieces of City-owned equipment and some vehicles owned by City maintenance workers were swamped in that flood.

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Community

Diablo Canyon From page 11

years, while the State brings online more renewable energy sources.

“The California Energy Commission (CEC),” reads a news release dated Feb. 28, “approved a staff analysis recommending the state pursue extending operation of Diablo Canyon Power Plant [DCPP] through 2030 to ensure electricity reliability. The determination is based on data showing California risks energy supply shortfalls during extreme weather events driven by climate change.”

Under Senate Bill 846, the CEC was required to “determine the need to extend DCP’s license to operate beyond its expiration date of 2025.”

Owned by Pacific Gas & Electric, Diablo Canyon produces some 17% of the State’s so-called “zero emissions electricity” and 9% of the State’s total electrical output, according to the CEC.

CEC Vice Chair Siva Gunda said, “As California confronts a rapidly changing climate, extraordinary heat events and record energy demand are becoming increasingly ordinary. The state needs to keep all options on the table to protect public health and safety. This includes maintaining Diablo Canyon’s operations to support reliability statewide in the near-term.

“An extension would allow more time for additional clean energy projects to come online as we work on the long-term transition away from fossil fuels.”

PG&E had announced Diablo Canyon’s closure, ending an effort to have the reactor licenses renewed through the Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission. That already lengthy process was being fought every step of the way by environmental groups and plant critics, who have always been leery of the plant due mainly to earthquake safety concerns, among others.

Diablo Canyon, which is located on Point Buchon, has several earthquake faults running offshore that critics are concerned could trigger a temblor large enough to damage the plant and endanger the public.

PG&E had been studying the faults as part of the relicensing process but that ended when the company decided to close it down.

But the State Legislature, Gov. Gavin Newsom, and even the Federal Government including President Biden, have had second thoughts with the realization that so-called green energy plants — solar and wind generation — won’t be completed in time to replace Diablo’s output.

The SB 846 is one of several bills passed in the State Legislature and signed by Gov. Newsom, that call for keeping the plant open for at least a few more years, even allocating a \$1 billion forgivable loan to help PG&E pay for keeping it open.

The company has petitioned the NRC to resume the relicensing using the abandoned application but the NRC has said it must start relicensing anew.

Since the Legislature’s actions last year, other agencies have come on board with studies, recommendations and such in support of the new direction the political winds are blowing.

However, critics continue to oppose the plant’s contin-

ued operations and there is no guarantee it will stay open, despite the actions of the State agencies. The CEC said the power is needed now more than ever.

“The determination,” the CEC said of its study and board vote, “comes as California is experiencing a substantial shift in conditions affecting the electric grid, which is transitioning to the state’s clean energy future, while confronting the impacts of climate change.

“This includes extreme heat and wildfires that threaten the grid with growing frequency and intensity.”

The big heat wave last fall was an eye-opener for the State.

“On Sept. 6, 2022, the California ISO [Independent System Operator or ISO] reached a new all-time high peak load of 52,061 megawatts (MW) during a record-breaking 10-day heat wave, nearly 2,000 MW higher than the previous record.

“Updated forecasts show this type of extreme event is increasingly likely to occur because of rising temperatures.”

The CEC staff is doing additional studies including one that will compare costs to keep Diablo Canyon operating versus the alternatives. And, “At the same time, the California Public Utilities Commission [CPUC] is evaluating how extension impacts electricity rates.”

This could all be a moot point if the NRC votes not to accept PG&E’s relicensing application, despite both the Governor and President agreeing it should remain open for now.

And there’s also the issue of continued use of the once through seawater cooling that’s used to cool steam in Diablo Canyon’s reactors. The State Water Resources Control Board, back in 2020, amended its rules on once through cooling (OTC) to extend the deadline to reduce impacts

of OTC on marine life by over 90%, in essence switching cooling methods to dry/air cooling or wet cooling.

The changes moved back the deadlines for compliance at Diablo Canyon to match the expiration dates on the two reactor licenses.

The SWRCB originally had a deadline of 2015 for fossil fuel plants and 2020 for nuclear power plants to greatly reduce or end the use of seawater or freshwater for cooling steam.

Each plant using OTC was given a target date for closure. Of the 19 power plants that used OTC, 10 — including the Morro Bay Power Plant — simply closed rather than pay to revamp the cooling systems.

Some plants, like Moss Landing, which was updated with new technology in the early 2000s, are seeking other options to meet the requirements.

In a study conducted by PG&E, it was reported that Diablo Canyon uses some 2.5 billion gallons a day of seawater for cooling the reactor’s steam loops and “No effective modifications to existing system are available,” reads the study’s fact sheet.

The report concluded that dry cooling — essentially big fans drawing air over steam pipes — was infeasible due to either space limitations or earthquake safety issues.

So-called wet cooling was “likely infeasible” due to adverse impacts and permitting.

PG&E pegged the costs for retrofitting the cooling system to get rid of OTC at \$4.46 billion.

So while it seems agencies are falling into line regarding extending Diablo Canyon’s life, there are still significant hurdles to overcome, with the federal NRC the final hurdle outside any potential court challenges.

Baby it was Cold Outside

I case you missed it; we had snow across the Central Coast. Santa Margarita, Paso Robles and the Cuesta Grade were among the areas with snow on the ground — enough for a few snowball fights.

Morro Bay Rotary Club President John Solu took this photo of the glistening bay with snow-covered hills in the background while out for a walk.

Thank you to all the readers who sent in pictures. It was great to see your images of our rare weather.



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Community

Moving Forward From page 1

passionately at city council and volunteer for community events. And why I will continue to be a resident.”

Don’t be surprised to see him someday at the city council podium lobbying with Living Treasure Jack Smith for a first-class skateboard park – who knew Scott is a skateboarder!

However, sometimes the universe offers us a new path to live out our passions. “I was offered an opportunity that draws on my personal heart strings,” Collins said.

His first day as executive director for the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo (HASLO) was March 6.

“There is a waiting list of 1,000 people that need housing in our county - many more not even on the list,” he said noting the nonprofit is already producing a HAS-LO project on Atascadero Road in Morro Bay, a 35-unit, low-income apartment complex. He intends to create more work-force housing.

Collins believes his strongest accomplishment has been to build a capable executive team. “We’ve been able to attract some skilled, talented people to our city. They came from other places to a community willing to be creative and try things. They all care and chose to be here. I hope the community will remember they are doing a very hard job.”

Besides a highly contested reclamation plant, a pandemic that shuttered the business community and major flooding from rising creeks and torrential rains that literally made Morro Bay a county island, he credits his team’s diligent work to provide for the immediate needs of the community. Besides staff, he included MB Chamber of Commerce CEO Erica Crawford, who he said has worked side-by-side on his team to provide pandemic and weather-related information and support to any and all affected businesses plus economic development leadership.

“We have infrastructure that was built in WWII, 50-60-year-old storm drains, harbor, sewer plant, buildings,” Collins said. “Our challenge is to balance and manage what is necessary to do without over burdening the rate payer. That demands a thriving business community and willing residents working together and creatively reinvest-

ing back into our community. How do we balance today’s rapid technological and societal changes while creating a needed vibrant business community without compromising a bit of the small-town culture we treasure? We must stay in the conversation, be respectful and build on many ways to connect with each other to maintain and create the community we all want to live in.”

So, who is Scott Collins? A past Citizen of the Year and active community member, Nancy Castle, might have captured the essence of a Scott Collins many might not know yet. During the recent flooding on North Main where her home and business (AGP Video) is, Castle was clearing mounds of mud and trying to move furniture upstairs so she could continue to live there. She heard a knock and opened her door to a young man. “Who are you?” she asked befuddled. “I’m Scott Collins, your City Manager. How can I help?” And he helped move her furniture upstairs as good neighbors will do.

Erica Crawford said, “I know I am a better person and a better professional because I spent five years and one global pandemic with Scott at our regular meetings one hour a week, one week at a time.” She echoes how many of us feel. “I wish him all success and joy in his new position and will miss him!”

This writer met Scott soon after he was on the job. As he did with many others, he invited me into his office to share my thoughts about Morro Bay and asked what priorities I hoped he might include in his scope of work. I mentioned several options, but key for me was to repair the once close bond and communication our city leadership and Morro Bay Rotary had in years past. Scott fulfilled my hope and became an active member.

“Scott was hired at a time when our city was in turmoil,” said John Solu, the -2022-23 rotary president. “He came in with a warm smile, a calm demeanor, great tattoos, and an incredible ear for listening to the community. At the time we were involved in the tourism industry. We were extremely surprised when Scott said, ‘I don’t know anything about running a tourism business, and I’m not going to tell successful people what I think should be done. I’m going

to rely on their advice to make us all successful.’ True to his word he put focus groups together of leaders in different industries including tourism and he let them help guide the process toward success. He saw the true value of the partnership between the hotel industry and the City. The biggest compliment we could give Scott is to relay that his actions and his deeds brought back mutual respect and a new and solid level of trust between the City administration and the tourism industry.”

I’ve gathered several comments from other community members and his management team. My apologies if room did not allow their complete comments. Each offered best wishes for success at HASLO.

Mayor Carla Wixom: “The community, as well as myself, certainly appreciate Scott’s service, leadership and dedication to Morro Bay. It is always difficult to lose such a valued staff member and team leader.” Scott’s comments about our newly elected Mayor Wixom echoed back their mutual admiration and trust to make things happen.

Michael Wambot, executive director of Visit Morro Bay: “When I started my role, he was instrumental in my introduction to the city and the community. Scott’s vision for tourism has helped Visit Morro Bay gain an impactful multiyear strategic plan, new branding, and an overall sense of pride in tourism.”

Sarah Johnson-Rios, assistant city manager: “Scott embodies the spirit of public service in his work. He truly cares not only about the Morro Bay community, but also about the City organization and the women and men who deliver critical City services. His humility, commitment, and element of fun that he brings to the team will be sorely missed.”


Greg Kwolek, public works director: “Scott knows instinctually that you get the best outcomes when you take care of your people. He’s done that with City staff, and as a result he’s created an organization that works hard and loves what they do. This accomplishment is especially impressive given the timing with high profile projects, such as the WRF program, where he showed unrelenting support for his staff. The spirit of professionalism and the internal bonds that were created here under his guidance will remain as his legacy.”

Dana Swanson, city clerk: “I’m grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Scott the past 5-plus years. He is a dedicated leader – intelligent, articulate, open-minded, committed to personal and professional growth. He’s also a great listener able to bring diverse perspectives toward a common goal.”

Chris Neumeyer, city attorney: “Scott is an amazing, brilliant and kind leader. His leadership has been critical to seeing the City through major projects, the City’s response to a pandemic, and managing the City’s day-to-day affairs. Scott has an ability to both inspire as well as get things done.”

Scot Graham, community development director: “Scott is a leader that is not interested in personal accolades, but instead seeks to inspire, support, and motivate others in the organization to push their boundaries, raise

Moving Forward Continued on page 19










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WRF Open House From page 1

treatment plant with an advanced water purification facility that meets state regulations, protects the environment, and can create a drought buffer through a safe and reliable water source for Morro Bay’s homes and businesses in the future.”

Public Works Director, Greg Kwolek, who came here not long after the project got underway, said, “It’s great to see the collective interest from the public as they are finally able to check out the new Water Resources Center we’ve been talking about for years.

“I want to thank the many people and agencies who had a role in completing the facility and pipelines. This project embodies our commitment to sound water resource planning for our future that meets federal and state regulations. I also want to thank the community of Morro Bay for patience and cooperation through more than two years of construction.”

Construction on what was originally a \$126 million project started in May 2020 and was completed in February 2023, with the cost now topping \$160 million.

Financing for the project is coming from \$138 million in State and Federal low-interest loans (some \$69M from the Federal Government) , and some \$15.5 million in grants.

The treatment plant has a capacity of one million gallons a day, according to the City and was designed and built by a partnership of Filanc and Black & Veatch. Anvil Builders was the contractor for the conveyance system, which was originally bid out at \$31 million. Filanc/B&V’s original contract was for some \$69 million.

The City had been under orders from the Regional Water Quality Control Board to upgrade its sewer treatment to full secondary level going back to 2003.

Different iterations of a project were bandied about including a simple upgrade, to partial replacement, to a full replacement of the treatment plant at the existing site on Atascadero Road.

But that project, which the City and Cayucos Sanitary District both approved in 2010, was appealed by two Coastal Commissioners and a dozen local citizens and environmental organizations.

In 2013, the newly elected City Council majority asked the Commission to deny the project, in an unheard of move that effectively killed the project and ruined for good the relationship between Morro Bay and Cayucos.

Morro Bay and Cayucos parted ways not long after the Coastal Commission decision. Cayucos has since built its own \$27 million treatment plant on Toro Creek Road, which opened in June 2021 and no longer uses the old treatment plant on Atascadero Road.

The Coastal Commission’s decision sought to enact a policy on climate change and more specifically sea level rise. The Commission adopted a policy of “retreat from the coast” in response to sea level rise and so-called “coastal hazards” like tsunami and erosion from sea level rise.

The Morro Bay-Cayucos sewer treatment project was the first major California public infrastructure project to move away from the coast to avoid coastal hazards, which

have always existed but are predicted to get worse because of climate change.

The move inland increased the costs of Morro Bay’s project from an estimated \$58 million to now \$160 million and counting (final change orders and cost increases are still pending).

The two agencies have always had a rocky relationship, and the divorce meant each built a treatment plant, but they still jointly own the old plant site on Atascadero Road, as well as an undersea discharge pipeline.

Discussions on how that site will be decommissioned and what will become of the property have been going on behind the scenes and announcements on the future of that prime piece of property are expected sometime later this year.

According to the City’s news release, “The City will decommission the existing wastewater treatment plant near the beach by 2025.”

If readers missed the big grand opening and tour, the City said that due to high public interest, it would be announcing additional tour dates in the future and is speaking to the school district about arranging field trips to the plant.

New Eateries From page 1

head and says he works La Katrina during the day and pulls a double shift at Pancho’s, a breakneck pace that many other entrepreneurs might appreciate.

Morales says they opened their restaurant last Nov. 22, filling a space that had been a Chinese restaurant — Imperial China and then China Dragon — for many years and was once home to a Swiss restaurant, too.

But switching cuisines meant many other changes had to be made. Morales explained that they had to replace much of the kitchen equipment to go from “wok-style” cooking to grilling required with their menu.

They were also fortunate that the dinning room and entryway were pretty much in place and not in need of major remodeling, though they did add a colorful “Día de Los Muertos” mural of their mascot, “La Catrina,” on the interior wall and outdoor monument sign. The symbol is meant as a tribute to one’s family and ancestors who’ve died to pass on their stories.

A traditional mascot seems to fit their restaurant. “It’s authentic, traditional Mexican food,” Morales says. “The recipes have been in Raphael’s family for over 25 years.”

Asked what his specialty is, Hernandez counts off “chili verde, burritos, enchiladas,” and more. One offering has three different kinds of enchiladas plus, of course, rice and beans, in somewhat of a sampler of the variety of dishes he makes.

La Katrina is among a trio of Mexican restaurants that are now open on the Embarcadero, a place known for a variety of fare that’s grown a lot over the past couple of years.

La Katrina is at 500 Embarcadero, and is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Mondays-Saturdays, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays, 7-3.



The oyster bar at Keepers in Morro Bay.

Keepers

A spot that was once home to The Otter Rock Café, is now Keepers, an elegant eatery, owned by Paso Robles native and veteran restaurateur, Roger Sharp.

The space was completely made over by master leaseholder, Cliff Branch a few years ago, and had been first re-opened as the Port House, which never really caught on with the public.

Keepers grabs your attention from the minute you enter, with a bright pink neon sign that says, “Hello Gorgeous,” next to a Morro Bay, Ca. sign on the wall.

“We did some cosmetic changes,” Sharp says, as a reporter who was a regular at Otter Rock points out the eye-catching entrance. They switched to earth tones, he explains, varied the textures on the walls (including a section that looks like bricks) and put in the oyster bar.

What else grabs your attention is an iced display case with big crabs and lobsters. Around the corner at the bar is an impressive oyster bar with the mollusks from different sources on display and ready for shucking.

Sharp also owns Blue Skye Café in Marina Square that he bought a few years ago as well as the Sweet Shop a bakery and coffee shop in the Salt Building (Beach Burgers is also there).

Sharp has a lot of plates spinning in the air at once. He explains that his company also has two Tortilla Town locations — in SLO and Paso Robles; Big Bubba’s BBQ in Paso; Nate’s Nashville Hot Chicken and is also getting ready to open Tito’s Red Tacos in Pismo Beach sometime in April. He opened Keepers on Feb. 8.

“It keeps me jumping,” he laughs, about what a workload with so many locations might be like. He adds that it’s a family business and his wife helps with the restaurants as well. He also has a management team that oversees the different locations under the apt name, “Bad to the Bone Management.”

Sharp said originally he thought about opening Keepers as a Cajun-style restaurant but after consideration, switched the theme. “We decided to highlight the oysters instead.” The interior is decidedly a sit-down style restaurant with booths and tables of varying sizes and a raised



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center dining area. Their menu is huge with a variety of seafood dishes from oyster shooters to lobster rolls and dozens of others. And while they don't have a full liquor license, "We have 25 beers on tap," Sharp says, with a "substantial wine list."

Sharp says they make up for not having distilled spirits with a number of specialty drinks, some using the Korean spirit, Soju, which has an alcohol content that falls under their beer and wine license.

"Our drinks are really awesome," Sharp says. "They're nice, creative drinks."

"We wanted to give the Embarcadero something different."

Keepers is at 885 Embarcadero (at the foot of Harbor street) and open Wednesdays-Mondays (closed Tuesdays, for now) from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sharp says they are working on also opening up for breakfast soon, hopefully sometime in April.

They've only been open a couple of weeks. "We're dialing everything in," he says, "it takes a little bit."



Nadine Iniquez and Luis Cortez, owners of Rock Tacos

Rock Tacos

It's the newest restaurant in the Embarcadero's newest development.

Rock Tacos is the first restaurant to open in the upstairs space at Morro Bay Landing (next to Harbor Hut). Bob Fowler is the master lease-holder for Morro Bay Landing, which was once Virg's Landing tackle shop.

Fowler has built new, much needed docks, and replaced the single story tackle shop with a new, stylish building with the roofline reminiscent of waves on the ocean that was designed by local architect Gene Doughty.

It also houses the Visit Morro Bay Visitor's Center, Morro Bay Oyster Company, Patriot Sports Fishing (booking for the Endeavor and Black Pearl); and Central Coast Lift, an electric vehicle rentals and Lift e-foils sales.

Rock Tacos is another Mexican food restaurant that overlooks the marina and has an unobstructed view of the harbor and Morro Rock. Rock Tacos just opened Feb. 20 and is owned by husband-wife team, Nadine Iniquez and Luis Cortez.

Iniquez explains that she is new to the restaurant business but her husband is a veteran cook who previously worked for many years at the Harbor Hut and House of JuJu, both are also on the Embarcadero.

Theirs is a "modern Mexican menu," she says, "specializing in tacos — pork, beef, chicken, shrimp, mushroom and cactus." Cactus? (This reporter can attest with confidence that the cactus is delicious.)

Iniquez chuckles and says the mushrooms and cactus are vegetarian offerings.

They also have other fare including tortas, and different ceviche (seafood stew).

They are in the process of getting a beer and wine license, she says, and for now offer Mexican soft drinks and brews.

Iniquez says her husband makes everything fresh daily from scratch, and, "Nothing is pre-made."

Their plans include putting in some TVs to play sporting events like prize fights, pro sports and especially soccer, and to make good use of the big patio with the million-dollar view. "We want to make it an 'atmosphere,'" she says.

Rock Tacos, 1215 Embarcadero, is open daily for lunch and dinner from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. They also plan to do a big grand opening soon, once their beer and wine license is granted.

Moving Forward From page 17

their standards, and aspire to more. To this end, Scott takes little to no credit for City successes, instead choosing to acknowledge and recognize the staff responsible for the achievement."

Cindy Jacinth, senior planner, Planning Department: "A great city manager, Scott has always supported staff and respected others' opinions and input. Smart, thorough, with a pragmatic style that I thought was a good fit for the community."

Becka Kelly, harbor patrol supervisor: "Scott listened and remained positive to find solutions. We are sad to lose Scott's attention and leadership now that we are making progress for our harbor's future. He was understanding, had innovative ideas and made careful decisions."

Rachael Hendricks, human resource manager: "I found his leadership qualities inspiring. He leads by example, fosters a positive work environment, and encourages open communication."

Chad Ouimet, chief building inspector: "Scott has provided the needed leadership to increase staff morale and most importantly, update crucial customer service positions that have been neglected for years. I believe his focus and vision on employee relations and proper staffing levels should be the gold standard for Morro Bay's success in the future."

Kirk Carmichael, recreation service manager: "Scott Collins is one of the best people this City has seen in decades. He is smart, kind, fair, and wise as well as educated in public administration and experienced in city management. He guided this City through some very difficult times, made much needed change, tackled large projects

Moving Forward From page 17

without hesitation, while fostering a positive, collaborative work environment for his staff. He, hands down, is the best boss I have ever had."

Morro Bay Fire Chief Daniel McCrain: "Scott is a dedicated, strong, but humble city manager. He has fostered an environment of collaboration and teamwork to provide the highest level of service to the community."

Morro Bay Police Chief Amy Watkins: "Scott cares about his staff. He was always willing to listen to anyone with an idea or issue that was brought to him. He always kept an open door and open mind. I appreciated the respect and trust that he gave his staff to do their jobs."

Susan Stewart, planning commissioner and Beads by the Bay downtown business owner, probably said it best for so many of us: "I'm sure plenty of people will talk about Scott's deep caring for Morro Bay, his compassion for its people, his sense of humor and the balance he created between the needs of the larger group and the desires of individuals. But for me one of the things that stood out was how special and essential he made me feel as a member of the community and the various boards I have served on. He probably made everyone feel this way. It's a gift of his kind of leadership, and I think it made us all rise-up that much higher. Many thanks to Mr. Collins, and all the best for the future!"



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