

## Downtown Dispensary Property to be Auctioned



An aerial view of the nhc cannabis dispensary property, 495 Morro Bay Blvd. that will be sold via online auction July 24-26. Photo submitted

By Neil Farrell

A rare opportunity to buy a piece of commercial real estate in the middle of Downtown Morro Bay is about to hit the auction block, and with a good tenant under lease, it could be a fantastic investment opportunity.

The building at 495 Morro Bay Blvd., which is currently the home of the Natural Healing Center or nhc cannabis dispensary, is slated to go up for Internet auction July 24 on Loop Net (see: [www.loopnet.com/listing/495-morro-bay-CA/28572118](http://www.loopnet.com/listing/495-morro-bay-CA/28572118)).

The auction will close on the 26th and whomever puts in the highest bid — above the reserve price — can own a piece of Downtown Morro Bay's commercial district.

Young told Estero Bay News that this is part of a larger sale of properties owned by Helios Dayspring, another Morro Bay native son who was in on the start of the local cannabis industry.

Dayspring first opened an nhc store in Grover Beach that was just the second dispensary in SLO

County. He also got licenses and opened stores in Morro Bay and Lemoore and was in the process of opening another in Turlock, Calif., up in Stanislaus County (near Modesto).

He also was in the process of opening a dispensary in San Luis Obispo at 22460 Broad St., but before he got it opened, his world blew up.

Dayspring was arrested by the FBI and charged with bribing former County Supervisor, the late-Adam Hill to get cannabis licenses for grow sites.

Hill committed suicide in 2020 after his Pismo Beach home was searched by the FBI. Dayspring eventually pled guilty and served time in prison for the felony and now that he's out on parole, wants to divest himself of the cannabis industry altogether.

Aaron Young, who is handling the sales through the firm, Big Block Realty in Santa Maria, said the Morro Bay, Lemoore and Turlock properties, are all going on the auction block the same day. The SLO property on Broad Street will be sold in August, he added.

The SLO property is problematic. Young ex-

**Auctioned** Continued on page 18

## Moving Forward: Mary & Phil Bettencourt - Cayucos Land Conservancy



Mary and Greg Bettencourt, pictured on vacation in Florence, Italy, serve on the Cayucos Land Conservancy Board of Directors. Photo submitted

By Judy Salamacha

When I was well into my career in Kern County, I served on The Nature Conservancy's locally based committee to help advocate its worldwide mission. I managed the public affairs and marketing department for a large corporate development business that master planned neighborhoods. Among other duties, I was encouraged to become involved in diverse community groups to determine and monitor the company's annual giving. I learned the concept of conservancy could be the bridge to bring balance to communities developed with thoughtful advance planning. Conservancy is defined as an organization that works to protect animals, plants, and natural resources especially by purchasing and caring for areas of land.

We moved permanently to the Central Coast 21 years ago. We had a vacation condo in Cayucos several years before we moved and when I met Greg and Mary Bettencourt, I discovered Cayucos had an active land conservancy program that had a track record of living up to its name and stated purpose. Their website [www.cayucoslandconservancy.org](http://www.cayucoslandconservancy.org)

**Moving Forward** Continued on page 19

## Council Picks Roundabout to fix Hwy 41 and Main



By Neil Farrell

Despite going round and round and getting several letters in opposition, a split City Council decided to pursue a roundabout at Main Street and Atascadero Road (Hwy 41), as the solution to that over-taxed intersection.

The intersection at Hwy 41 and Main St., Morro Bay

The Council was given three basic choices — do nothing and leave the intersection as is with a 4-way stop; put in stoplights (one at Main/Atascadero Road and another at Atascadero Road and the on and off ramps to Hwy 1); or put in a roundabout, which was by far the most expensive to construct but

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## \$56M Budget Approved in Morro Bay Effective Now

By Neil Farrell



Morro Bay's Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget tops \$56 million overall and increases spending in several ways including selected infrastructure repairs and addressing looming employee pension liabilities.

Interim City Manager Greg Carpenter and Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director, Sarah Johnson-Rios, presented the budget to the City Council in May when they held special council

**Budget** Continued on page 16

## City to Sell F/V Windwalker

By Neil Farrell



The Morro Bay Harbor Department was slated to auction off a local fishing boat after the owner fell behind on slip payments to the department.

Harbor Director Ted Schiafone told Estero Bay News that the F/V Windwalker, a federal registered vessel, was seized by the City last year and is set for auction at 2 p.m. Thursday, July 13 at the Harbor Office.

Windwalker has been sitting at the North T-Pier with stickers on the window of the wheelhouse indi-

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Project  
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# Approvals Given for Cambria Fire Break



A map showing the Cambria burn areas  
By Neil Farrell

Two conservation agencies are planning to fight fire with fire in Cambria and they’ve been given permission to fire away by the Coastal Commission. The Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife asked the Commission for a coastal development permit for the “Cambria Reserves Restoration and Vegetation Treatment Project,” a plan to address two large patches of scrub and Monterey Pine forest lands in order to reduce and manage the potential for more catastrophic wildfire. Much of the land in question is preserved under one plan or another and the total area covers some 291 acres. Some 187 acres lies within the University of California Natural Reserve System’s Kenneth S. Norris Rancho Marino Reserve, according to a Commission report. There’s another 104 acres within the Cambria Pines Ecological Reserve top be treated. The Norris Rancho Marino Reserve or RMR, as the report refers to it, has 170 acres of vegetation and 17 acres of pine trees, which have been designated as rare and important forestland “in need of restorative management focused on forest health and wildfire prevention,” according to the RMR’s management plan. “The goals for the proposed vegetation treatments,” the CCC’s report said, “are to increase the health and vigor of the Monterey pine forest, increase biological diversity, and reduce the severity of wildfire.” The goals are a bit different at the Cambria Pines Reserve; “treatments would consist of ecological restoration treatments, where the goals are to control invasive plants, promote germination and recruitment

of Monterey pines to maintain a healthy Monterey pine forest, enhance abundance and diversity of native grasses and forbs in grasslands, maintain rare plant populations, and minimize conditions that lead to catastrophic fire and plant community type conversion.” It won’t all necessarily get burned, however. “Proposed treatment activities would consist of prescribed burning, manual treatments, mechanical treatments, and herbicide application. “Vegetation may be left on-site or burned on-site in the form of broadcast burning, pile burning, or using specialized biomass processing technologies (e.g., air curtain burner, carbonator).” The work is slated to start as soon as possible this year and continue over a 3-year period. Then maintenance treatments of the same sorts and “would be implemented in subsequent years to perpetuate forest and ecosystem health and minimize conditions that lead to catastrophic fire.” According to the RCD’s plan (see: [www.us-ltrcd.org/files/0ac6e16ec/4.+Board+Approved+Cambria+PSA+and+Appendices.pdf](http://www.us-ltrcd.org/files/0ac6e16ec/4.+Board+Approved+Cambria+PSA+and+Appendices.pdf)), there’s a small area within the RMR, about an acre, that won’t be treated because it’s a wetland, and wetlands are outside the scope of the plan. The 104-acre Cambria Pines Ecological Reserve is owned and managed by Fish & Wildlife, which acquired the property in 2005. The previous owners used to graze cattle there and in the distant past, it was logged. The area closest to the town of Cambria is grassland mixed with shrubs. The pine forest covers the majority of the reserve. “The Monterey pine forest in the reserve is part of the Pico Creek-Cambria stand,” the RCD report said, “one of the three natural stands of the species in mainland California.” Fish & Wildlife has designated it as “a sensitive natural community.” At the other property, the Marino Reserve covers some 591 acres, with the management plan only concerning 187 acres. The pines there are also part of the Pico Creek-Cambria stand of trees, according to the RCD. UCSB runs the RMR. “The management of RMR by the University of California, Santa Barbara as a research station began in 2001,” the RCD report said. “Historically, the property supported cattle operations beginning in the early 1900s. Currently, cattle graze a small portion of the treatment area along the northern boundary of the reserve.” The RCD estimates these two areas historically don’t suffer wildlife very often, but they do happen. At the Cambria Reserve records show one small fire of less than half an acre over the 20th and 21st Centuries. Another study in 1990 estimated Monterey Pines in general burn every 1-15 years, before Europeans arrived in the area. For the Rancho Marino Reserve fire frequency is pegged at every 11-20 years. The rare fire frequencies support the long known threat of wildfire in Cambria, which is famously built interspersed within the pine forest. At the Cambria Reserve, they also plan “to install a 17-acre shaded fuel break with the primary objective of protecting the campers at Camp Ocean Pines. The proposed shaded fuel break would be implemented in forested habitats that occur between the neighborhood adjacent to the north boundary of RMR and Camp Ocean Pines.” That shaded fuel break would run adjacent to Randall Road and run 400-500 feet to the border with

the Camp Ocean Pines property. It would also cover Strawberry Creek, which the RCD described as a “Class II seasonal creek” with native vegetation. “At least 75 percent of the overstory and 50 percent of the understory would be retained within the limits of riparian habitat,” the RCD report said, “and equipment limitations, restrictions on pile burning, and additional surface vegetation retention requirements would be implemented in designated watercourse and lake protection zones.” There are also some very steep areas along that stretch of creek that will require extra care. “Removal of riparian hardwood trees,” the RCD plan said, “would be minimized to the extent feasible, and 75 percent of the native riparian tree canopy would be retained.” Just how do they intend to get this work done? Using “Mowers, track chippers, chainsaws and other hand tools, backpack or hand sprayers (for herbicide), wildland engines (water during burning), air curtain burner and/or carbonator,” according to the report. They will also use “masticators,” which have metal teeth that grind or chew woody debris in 1 to 2-inch pieces. The head of the masticator can tackle trees and brush up to 4-inches in diameter.

## Correction

Last issue’s story about the Los Osos CSD and S&T Mutual entering talks about buying into a new water well the CSD is drilling, mistakenly said S&T Mutual has been getting CSD water for some time. S&T’s Board President, Julie McAdon said they have an “emergency water hauling agreement but no intertie with the CSD.” That connecting pipeline is part of the negotiations she explained. Also, McAdon said the S&T folks hooked up with the County’s community sewer system along with everyone else. And it was the Monarch Grove subdivision next door to Sunset Terrace that is now hooking into the County sewer and giving up its package system. Sorry about the mix-up.

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Donations Needed to Repair Community Project Damaged in Collision



A California Highway Patrol officer investigates the median on Los Osos Valley Road that a hit and run driver tore through last weekend. Photo by Pandora Nash-Karner

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

A local community benefit group is looking for donations and possibly volunteers to repair a project that’s completion was years in the making in Los Osos, but was damaged in a car collision.

On July 1 just before 11 p.m. an allegedly drunk driver slammed into the median that runs on Los Osos Valley Road parallel to the Ralph’s shopping center causing thousands of dollars in damages.

“The driver was arrested for driving under the influence,” California Highway Patrol Officer Robert Willoughby told Estero Bay News declining to give the name of the woman behind the wheel. “[The crash report] says it was a major collision, there were no injuries to report. It was a hit and run. It was a female; she left the scene and then came back to the scene.”

The non-profit Celebrate Los Osos was behind the 2021 project that revitalized the median that leads into Los Osos.



A tree was taken out by its roots during the accident. Photo by Pandora Nash-Karner

“The driver took out the first sign tossing it at high speed about 75 feet,” said Celebrate Los Osos President Pandora Nash-Karner. “The driver then bent and knocked over three other signs, completely destroyed a cork oak tree — pulling it out by the roots — that volunteers planted in 2008—and kept driving on the median pulling up irrigation lines, ripping out plants, and large decorative boulders as if there were pebbles, and only slowed apparently when hitting a second oak tree, damaging the bark down to the cambium.”

Early estimates put the cost at \$4,670, a number that could increase following the extent of the damage to the irrigation lines where the car drove that may not be fully known until the water has run several cycles.

“Even if the person’s insurance pays for the damage, it may take a very long time for it to pay,” said Nash-Karner. “In the meantime, it must be repaired. We will ask for donations to do that. If insurance eventually pays for the damage that money will go to future projects.

There is no way the person’s labor can repair the damage, that will take highly skilled professionals.”

In 2021, labor on the project to beautify the median was completed with the help of volunteers. It was one of many several attempts to make what many consider the town entrance aesthetically pleasing.

“For visitors, entrances—an expression of the identity of a place—change the viewer’s impression of the place they are approaching or passing by,” said Nash-Karner in a previous interview. “The quality

of the view and the overall visual perception of the environment speak volumes to the visitor. A long median with large barren and dead areas, torn-up irrigation lines, few live plants and struggling oak trees doesn’t invite a visitor to stop, explore and stay and certainly is uninspiring to residents. The median is the entrance to the local retail area and should make a positive statement.”

The project that transformed the almost barren median involved installing irrigation equipment for reclaimed water in the 1100-ft median, planting hundreds of drought tolerant plants as well as distributing a huge pile of topsoil and another one of gravel. It was a team effort with more than 100 volunteers made up of government officials, service organizations, business owners and community members on a Saturday in October. The non-profit, with help from Earthscapes, a Los Osos residential and commercial landscape design firm, had worked for two years redesigning the 1100-foot median.

At that time funding totaled \$11,820, which came from a San Luis Obispo County Infrastructure Grant and \$5,800 from County Public Works to go toward new plant materials and the new irrigation system. Celebrate Los Osos agreed to pay the reclaimed water bill and Central Coast Earthscapes would maintain the area.

Readers who want to donate to fix the median project or learn more about Celebrate Los Osos, should go to [celebratelososos.org](http://celebratelososos.org)

“Celebrate Los Osos has worked its magic since January 2008,” Nash Karner said. “But we can only be magic because of two things: Volunteers and money. Every project Celebrate Los Osos has ever done was accomplished by volunteers. And 100% of every dollar — donated goes to new projects and maintaining existing ones. The act of giving is a powerful way to make a difference in the world. Your donation of time and money, no matter how small, can help support projects in Los Osos that make a difference, one project at a time.”

Checks can also be mailed to Celebrate Los Osos, 350 Mitchell Drive Los Osos, CA 93402

This setback won’t deter Celebrate Los Osos and the many volunteers who make the projects possible.

Volunteers are still needed on July 15 for the annual boat creep prevention at Cuesta Inlet. For

Project Damaged Continued on page 4

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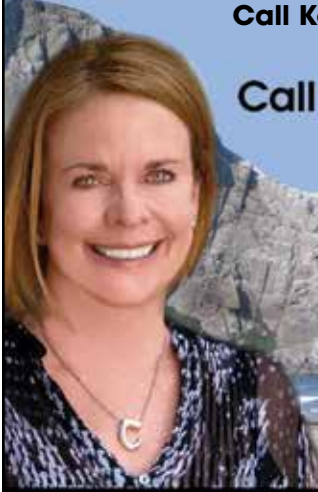


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**Project Damaged** From page 3

the past fourteen years, volunteers from Celebrate Los Osos have worked with the property owners, county code enforcement, Supervisor Bruce Gibson, the sheriff's department and their dive team, and the California Highway Patrol to clean up the inlet area. They have removed over a ton of litter, refloated sunk-en boats, attempted to find owners, and towed away orphan boats. Boats have increased from 286 in 2010 to now nearly 700.

Celebrate Los Osos volunteers will inspect each boat at the inlet starting at 9 a.m. Readers that want to volunteer for the Cuesta Inlet cleanup can contact Ellie Malykont at: Volunteer@CelebrateLosOsos.org.

Other projects on the table include repairs of Utterly Osos, the paddle-boarding cow-bear that chills out at the bay in Baywood; restoration of the welcoming signs on Los Osos Valley Road and on South Bay Boulevard designed; and completion of the wayfinding sign in Baywood.

The group is also looking for historically accurate information for an interpretive sign at the Red Barn in Los Osos.

BESS Signature Drive Continues

By Neil Farrell

Signature collecting continues by a group of Morro Bay residents pushing a ballot measure designed to force a vote of the people before the City Council can approve a permit for the world's largest battery facility to be built at the old power plant property.

Vistra Energy of Texas, owners of the long closed Morro Bay Power Plant, is proposing to build a 600 megawatt Battery Energy Storage System or BESS on some 22 acres of the over 100-acre power plant property. It would go where several huge oil storage tanks used to be situated back when the plant burned fuel oil and diesel. The plant switched over to natural gas in the mid-1990s and the oil tanks were removed around 2011.

"Signature collecting is going very well and we are super impressed with the energy exuded by our volunteers canvassing neighborhoods," reads an update by Judy Setting with the ballot measure group, Preserve Estero Bay. "If you haven't joined in, please do! Let's keep those pens moving!"

She added, "Initiatives are available at Buttercup on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. You can sign, volunteer to collect signatures or sit and chat."

The group meets at 10 a.m. Tuesdays at the Buttercup Bakery, 430 Morro Bay Blvd. Volunteers also man an information/sign-up booth from 2-4 p.m. Thursdays at Spencer's Market, 2650 N. Main St.; and Saturdays at Albertson's Market, 730 Quintana Rd., from noon-2 p.m., in addition to volunteers going door-to-door.

The ballot measure, which has yet to be given an official name, was given a title and summary by the City Attorney's Office back on May 16. According to City Clerk Dana Swanson, the proponents have 180 days or until the middle of October to collect 815 valid signatures of registered Morro Bay voters. Anyone outside of Morro Bay, no matter how strongly they might feel about the BESS project, is ineligible to sign the petition, let alone vote on it.

Once the petitions are turned in, the City Clerk will validate the signatures and then present it to the City Council. That's when the first big decision will have to be made.

"The Council can either call an election," Swanson told Estero Bay News, "or adopt the ordinance as presented."

"The Council," Swanson added, "may also request a report of the effects of the proposed initiative in accordance with Election Code §9212, that would be presented to the Council at the time prescribed by the legislative body but no later than 30 days after the results are certified. At the time the election is called, dates are established for filing of arguments for and against the initiative, as well as the City Attorney's impartial analysis, all of which are printed in the voters' guide."

So if the petition drive is successful and presuming the City Council doesn't simply accept it as written but decides to put it to voters, the earliest regular election would be the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election. After that it would be the November 2024 General Election, unless the City Council decides to hold a special election on the matter.

The BESS Project is currently under environmental impact review by a consultant hired by the City and paid for by Vistra. That EIR is expected to be released before the end of this year, and it remains to be seen if the City Council would take it up prior to an election, should the ballot measure makes it that far.

What does it do? According to the City Attorney's summary, "The measure prohibits, unless otherwise approved by a majority of City of Morro Bay voters, any change to the land use designations under Plan Morro Bay, of Visitor-Serving Commercial and/or Commercial/Recreational Fishing, in effect on the Approval Date, for approximately 103 acres of real property."

Plan Morro Bay is the name of the approved General Plan/Local Coastal Program Update the City took nearly a decade to complete that was approved by the City Council in May 2021, and by the Coastal Commission in August 2021.

If the ballot measure passes, it won't necessarily mean the BESS Project is dead, just that the City must seek voter approval in order to change the property's zoning to accommodate the BESS Project.

Normally, when big projects require zoning changes the change is included as part of the project proposal that goes to decision makers for approval.

Instead, the ballot measure requires the City to do whatever is necessary to change the General Plan/LCP to comply with the voter initiative and let the people vote on whether a BESS is right for their community.

It's a roundabout though not unusual way for opponents of a controversial project to take control and stop it. A similar path was taken in 1990 with a ballot measure (Measure H) that limited the acreage able to be used for a proposed shopping center on ranchlands east of Hwy 1 at Morro Bay Boulevard. Though it didn't exactly prevent the center from being built it severely limited its size, and the property owners dropped the project.

The BESS measure also forces the City to take "all steps reasonably necessary to enforce the measure and to defend the measure against any challenge to its validity," reads the City Attorney's summary.

Opponents of the BESS have expressed fears over the volatility of large lithium-ion battery facilities, mainly a concern of them potentially catching fire.

When lithium-ion batteries overheat, they can combust and when they burn, they let off toxic smoke. Such fires take specialty firefighting equipment to fight as well.

Opponents worry about the nearness of Morro Bay High to the BESS location, as well as the Embarcadero, which is the City's main tourist area and on busy holidays and most days in summer can have thousands of people milling about. And at the beach, people would be forced to go towards the fire to escape it.

Vistra has said the design and engineering they will use for the BESS, including an extensive fire suppression system, makes it safe for the location.

Vistra has a similar facility at its Moss Landing Power Plant in Moss Landing, Calif. Moss Landing and Morro Bay were part of a purchase of California power stations formerly owned by Duke Energy North America, which went out of business around 2007. Duke's plants were purchased by LS Power, which soon after was absorbed by Dynegy.

That company merged with Vistra a few years later, in a multi-billion dollar deal. In 2014, Vistra retired the 1950s and '60s-era power plant.

The Moss Landing plant, which DUKE was able to repower in the early 2000s with a modern facility (the same thing it had planned for Morro Bay), is still operational. The sister plant to Morro Bay in Moss Landing, with two smoke stacks, is being torn down by Vistra.

County to Replace Cayucos Water Main



A project to replace a water main on Hacienda Drive in Cayucos is out for bids.

San Luis Obispo County is out for bids on a project to replace a water main in Cayucos that's been leaking and losing nearly 30% of the water it carries.

On June 20, County Supervisors okayed a request from Public Works to advertise for bids on a project to replace the water main on Hacienda Drive, Cayucos, continuing a major upgrade of the County Services Area 10A watery system that supplies drinking water and powers the fire hydrants for much of the community.

Project Manager, Desiree Bravo's report to Supervisors said, "The Hacienda Drive water main is an integral part of the water system in County Service Area (CSA) 10A and is considered the highest priority for replacement. It conveys water to and from two 220,000-gallon storage tanks that provide equalization, emergency, and fire protection storage."

Cayucos Water Main Continued on page 6



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She added that over the past several years, “ more than 50% [~157 staff labor hours] of the total system leaks and pipeline breaks occurred along Hacienda Drive. These breaks contributed to an average of 28% of total annual system losses, exceeding the acceptable 10%-15% range.”

They had some really bad breaks on Hacienda Drive just recently. “In March/April 2023, three different pipe breaks occurred along Hacienda Drive,” Bravo said, “causing water service interruptions and the issuance of boil water notices to the affected residents.”

The pipeline project would replace some 1,750-feet of 6-inch AC pipe with 8-in PVC (plastic) pipe running up Hacienda from Ocean Boulevard to the north end of Hacienda Drive. They also plan to move the pipe to the other side of the roadway to avoid an area that is eroding downhill and keep the new pipe from breaking too. “This improvement,” Bravo said, “will reduce the time spent performing waterline leak repairs each year, improve fire flow demands in the system, and reduce overall water system losses.”

The engineer’s estimate for the construction part of the project is over \$640,000. The bid was posted July 6 and the 27th is the deadline to bid on the job.

But the current budget for the job tops \$931,000 with a total estimated cost of \$1.3 million. Money is coming out of the CSA-10A operating budget.

Under the County’s project budget it’s already spent \$72,600 in prior year costs; and has \$173,300 for preliminary engineering costs budgeted from the Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget with another \$246,000 expected costs for engineering.

It budgeted \$607,300 for construction in 2022-23 and upped that to \$708,000. It also includes \$60,000 in “soft costs” and \$202,000 in contingencies for the total \$1.3 million budgeted.

Still it may not be enough. “A corresponding budget adjustment will be submitted at the time of contract award for the anticipated project budget gap,” Bravo said.

This pipeline replacement goes with the replacement of an old water tank and addition of a second tank on the hilltop off Hacienda Drive completed a couple of years ago. The work was prompted by not only leaks but also a lack of redundancy in the system, needed for to ensure water is available for firefighting should the single tank fail for whatever reason.

Now with new, reliable storage tanks it’s apparently time to deal with the leaky pipe.

## New Public Defenders for Specialty Treatment Courts

The County has amended its contract with the public defenders office, increasing its contract for this fiscal year by nearly \$100,000 to handle the increased caseload resulting from two specialty courts.

The amendment expands the public defenders workforce to include cases in the Mental Health Diversion Court and the Adult Treatment Court Collaborative/Behavioral Health Treatment Court, according to a County report. The increase was for \$96,000 or \$8,000 a month, increasing to \$5.6 million the contract for base services in FY 2023-24, according to the report.

“When the current contact with Primary Public Defender, San Luis Obispo Defenders, was prepared,” reads the report, “the Adult Treatment Court Collaborative/Behavior Health Treatment Court and Mental Health Diversion specialty programs were being operated without attorney participation. The current contract provides for 24-25 attorneys available on a full-time basis, three full-time paralegals, one half-time paralegal, five full-time investigators, and one full-time social worker.”

The public defenders represent criminal defendants “that cannot afford an attorney. The Constitution of the State of California requires that counties provide for the legal defense of indigents accused of crimes.” The contract calls for the firm to defend all indigent clients under three contracts: the Primary Public Defender, the Conflict Public Defender, and the Conflict-Conflict Public Defender. The Primary Public Defender handles most indigent defense cases appointed by the Court.

The conflict and conflict-conflict contracts come into play when the primary has a conflict of interest with a client. It then falls under the conflict contract, which has other firms under contract. If that firm has a conflict too, the conflict-conflict contract comes into play.

Recent changes in State Law opened up the specialty treatment courts “as an alternative to incarceration,” the report said. “Specialty treatment courts are designed to address specific underlying conditions, such as addiction, trauma or mental health, which contributed to the criminal behavior and to provide tailored support to those in need. People who complete these specialty program experience significant positive lifestyle changes and they have a much lower rate of recidivism.”

Expansion has meant clients in these specialty courts now must have attorneys. Presiding Judge Craig van Rooyan in July 2022 asked the San Luis Obispo Defenders to begin staffing the two new courts.

“Without staffing,” the report said, “the Court would be forced to pause the court portion of these programs, which would negatively impact the 60-80 participants.”

Despite not being under contract for this, the firm “immediately recognized the importance of these programs and agreed to provide staffing despite a lack of funding. Since August 2022, Steve Rice has been staffing Mental Health Diversion Court and Brian Buckley has been staffing Adult Treatment Court

Collaborative/Behavioral Health Treatment Court.”

Logistics were a problem too, as both of the specialty courts meet in the County Courthouse on Fridays at 8:30 a.m. but in different courtrooms, which means they need two attorneys to handle the cases.

“In addition to being present in court, each attorney is required to review treatment reports before the hearing and to attend a meeting with the treatment team, the court and probation. When necessary, the attorney must also be available to meet with participants outside of court and appear on modification motions during the week. The attorney also utilizes the San Luis Obispo Defenders staff of paralegals, investigators, and social worker to effectively represent the interests of our clients in these specialty courts.”

These specialty court advocates’ duties include, “facilitating referral and participation of indigent defendants in any appropriate rehabilitation program and the Mental Health Diversion Pre-Release Program, assisting defendants in applications for needed services, developing sentencing alternatives, and monitoring cases during any probationary period of time. This shall include case management services to facilitate transition to behavioral health treatment and may include providing police reports when requested.”

Those items help a client get accepted into the specialty courts and once there, the attorney’s duties are handed over to specialty program case managers and treatment providers would take over and the specialty attorney was no longer involved. The Specialty Court Advocate would continue to passively monitor the clients and if/when a client was accused of a violation or facing exclusion, the advocate would assist as needed.”

The public defender contract was renewed in 2021 for 4 years with two, 2-year extensions available through the County Administrative Officer and this amendment adds onto that. The increased duties will not be applied to the last fiscal year (2022-23) but will apply to FY 2023-24, which began July 1.

It remains to be seen if the billing from the past fiscal year will require a further amendment to catch up with the additional costs.

## Woman Injured During 4th of July Parade

It was an un-happy Fourth of July for a woman watching a parade in North County, after she was injured in a run-away horse accident.

According to Sheriff’s spokesman, Tony Cipolla, about 11 a.m. Tuesday, July 4 during the Templeton Independence Day Parade, “a pony in the parade got spooked and ran into the crowd in the 600 block of Crocker Street in Templeton. The pony was pulling a cart with two people inside. When the pony entered the crowd, the shaft that attaches the cart to the pony’s harness, struck a 61-year-old woman in the leg, impaling the shaft in her thigh.”

Sheriff’s deputies, Templeton Fire Department and San Luis Ambulance all responded to the scene and the woman was taken to the hospital for her injuries. Cipolla said they did not know her condition.

She was not identified by the Sheriff’s Department. The people riding in the runaway horse’s wagon were not injured, but it messed up the parade.

“The parade was then diverted to another street while the woman was being treated,” Cipolla said.

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## News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

### Money Magazine Ranks Poly in Top 34

Cal Poly is among the 34 top public and private universities in the nation, according to Money magazine's 2023 Best Colleges rankings.

The personal finance website — which reports on mortgages, loans, credit, investing, and more — analyzed dozens of data points, including graduation rates, cost of attendance, financial aid and alumni salaries, to find colleges that combine quality and affordability.

Money redesigned its rankings system this year, abandoning numbered listings in favor of a star-tiered system — setting its list apart from other publications. The magazine used six rankings — from 2.5 to 5 stars — to identify the 736 schools “where your tuition (and time) is likely to pay off.”

Cal Poly achieved the 5-star rating along with 33 other schools across the U.S., including such Ivy League universities as Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Columbia. Cal Poly was among seven top California schools — and the only California State University campus — to receive 5-star recognition. The others are California Institute of Technology and Stanford University, both private research institutions, and four University of California campuses: Berkeley, Irvine, Los Angeles and San Diego.

More than 90% of Cal Poly graduates are working full time or in graduate schools within a year. Students go on to earn median salaries of just over \$85,000 in their early careers, a premium over similar schools, according to Money's analysis.

Rankings were released in late June. There is no single “best college” topping Money's new list, which addresses how worried students are about tuition prices and getting their money's worth.

“Everybody's interested in the ROI on their education, because college education is very expensive,” said Sue Harbour, associate dean and executive director of the career center at the UC Berkeley, according to Money. “People want to know: Is it worth my time and my money?”

The magazine's methodology is based on 26 factors in three categories: quality of education (30 percent), affordability (40 percent) and outcomes (30 percent), with 15 subcategories.

The new system recognizes that there are numerous ways for a school to provide value, with multiple “best” colleges, depending on a student's goals and priorities. Moreover, it encourages students and families to look beyond the most sought-after big-name institutions of

higher learning and deeper on the list, as there are many colleges where tuition dollars will pay off.

Cal Poly is also included on five of what Money calls its Popular Rankings, six categories that include top public schools, regional (West, South, Northeast and Midwest) schools and best acceptance rates.

To see the full Money rankings, go to: <https://money.com/best-colleges/>.

### EPA Recognizes SLO County for Leading Green Power Use



The County of San Luis Obispo has met the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's rigorous requirements to become a member of its Green Power Partnership.

The Green Power Partnership is a voluntary federal program recognizing organizations that demonstrate leadership in green power, growing the American market for green power and reducing air pollution and other environmental impacts associated with electricity use.

The County is using nearly 5 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power annually, which is enough to meet 19 percent of the organization's electricity use. According to the EPA, the County's green power use is equivalent to the electricity use of nearly 500 average American homes annually.

“This is a fantastic honor, and we are proud to be recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,” said Annie Secrest, County Public Works' Energy & Water coordinator. “Using green power helps our organization stabilize rising energy costs and lowers our emissions footprint, while also sending a message to others across the country that green power is an affordable, accessible choice.”

By moving the needle in the voluntary green power market, the County of San Luis Obispo and other part-

ners are helping reduce the negative health impacts of air emissions including those related to ozone, fine particles, acid rain, and regional haze.

The County is also active in ensuring energy conservation, energy efficiency, and energy resilience remain top priorities for its facilities and infrastructure. Numerous energy efficiency projects have been implemented and are underway. The County, in coordination with the Department of Energy, is in the early stages of an energy management campaign at small facilities, and recently energized three battery energy storage projects, with two more projects in design.

### Trolley Returns to Downtown SLO

The City of San Luis Obispo announced the return of the Old SLO Trolley running through September 7. On Thursdays from 5 to 9 p.m., the Old SLO Trolley will make its way down Monterey Street, loop downtown, then run back up Monterey Street every 20 minutes.

“We are thrilled to see the return of the Old SLO Trolley Service. This summer, getting around downtown San Luis Obispo will be even easier on Thursday evenings,” said Jennifer Rice, City Public Works Deputy Director of Mobility Services. “We encourage community members to hop on, explore, and appreciate all that our downtown has to offer.”

For just 50 cents (or 25 cents for seniors or disabled riders), the Old SLO Trolley covers the heart of Downtown SLO and its surrounding hotel areas. The Old SLO Trolley offers passengers a convenient, car-free form of public transit and is perfect for traveling to and from Downtown for dinner and shopping, even Thursday Evening Farmers' Market. All trolleys are accessible to all and equipped with air conditioning, so riders can travel in comfort.

#### The trolley will make the following stops:

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For more information on the trolley service routes and schedules, go to [slotransit.org](http://slotransit.org) or call at (805) 541-2877.

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

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Police Blotter



• **June 25:** Police contacted a suspicious sailor at 3:38 p.m. tacking along the 1700 block of Main. The 41-year-old swabby was allegedly three sheets to the wind and got Shanghai'd on a one-way voyage to the brig.

• **June 25:** At 10:40 a.m. at Beach and Morro, police stopped a suspicious vehicle for some undisclosed violation. The 34-year-old driver had three bench warrants and a suspended license. The dingus went to jail for his lack of judgment.

• **June 23:** Police responded to the 700 block of Morro Ave., where someone found an electric kick scooter apparently abandoned, and in 30 days it's finder's keepers.

• **June 23:** At 12:07 p.m. in the 700 block of Harbor police contacted a suspicious subject. Logs indicated the case involved possession of over an ounce of weed, drug paraphernalia of course being stoned in public. It did not indicate if anyone was arrested, nor for whom the bell tolled.

• June 23: Police were called to a disturbance at 9:34 a.m. in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd. A 41-year-old cranky-pants juice weasel was nicked for suspicion of being drunk & disorderly.

• **June 23:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:12 a.m. in the 1700 block of Main. The driver couldn't show proof of insurance and the registration was expired, so police arrested the car, which hardly seems fair to the car.

• **June 22:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 1:23 a.m. on Elena at Birch. A 30-year-old fellow was snatched away to the Parkinson Plaza for suspicion of driving half cut at the wheel.

• **June 21:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:30 p.m. in the 900 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the driver, 40, had a suspended license, and was stuck in jail.

• **June 20:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:07 p.m. at Beach and Main. A 66-year-old woman was cited and released on suspicion of driving zonked.

• **June 20:** Police contacted a repeat customer raising hell at 5:34 p.m. in the 1700 block of Main. The 40-year-old hombre was swatted for being spanked and unruly in public and was put out of our misery in County Jail.

• **June 20:** Police responded to the 500 block of Napa for a report of "unrecognized activity regarding taxes," let's hope not an overdue refund.

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• **June 19:** Police responded at 11 p.m. to a disturbance the 400 block of South Bay Blvd. A 32-year-old woman was arrested for violating a stay-the-hell-away order and her probationary promise to be good.

• **June 19:** Police responded to a domestic disturbance at 9:39 p.m. in the 2600 block of Greenwood. Logs indicated a 31-year-old male "physically assaulted his girlfriend with a door frame," reads the narrative. He then allegedly made "criminal threats" as he fled the scene, "causing her to fear for her safety." A crime report was begun and arrests are no doubt imminent.

• **June 19:** Police responded at 9:08 p.m. to the 600 block of Bella Vista for a report of hooligan juveniles peeping into the window of an inhabited house. No arrests as the knaves apparently vanished in the darkness.

• **June 18:** Police responded at 8 p.m. to the 1700 block of Embarcadero where some apparently unhappy camper took it out on his poor suffering wife, causing "visible injury" to his better half. The louse, 65, went to the big house for alleged abuse of his spouse.

• **June 18:** Police contacted an apparent unwelcomed humanicus dooficus at 5:15 p.m. in a business plaza in the 800 block of Quintana. Logs indicated police cited the interloper for suspicion of trespassing then let go the schmoe.

• **June 18:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 3:41 p.m. in the 1100 block of Main. Logs indicated the hombre, 40, had a bench warrant and police cited him and let him go, apparently to catch another day.

• **June 18:** Police responded to a disturbance in the 900 block of Main at 10:12 a.m., which would seem a bit early to be fit-shaded. The 34-year-old stultified dragon was sent to the dungeon for alleged D&D and trespassing.

• **June 18:** Police contacted a familiar fellow at 10:10 a.m. in the 400 block of Morro Bay Blvd. He had a bench warrant and was cited and released with a future second FTA. On the other hand, about 10 minutes before Mr. Wonderful got his due, a 39-year-old woman at the same location was contacted. She had five bench warrants and so police checked her into the Iron Bar Hotel.

• **June 18:** Police responded at 12:05 a.m. to a reported aggravated assault in the 900 block of Main. According to logs, a 61-year-old ruffian, who is "in a married relationship with the victim" smacked said victim across the face "causing red swelling, which was visible," according to logs. Police threw the violently vile villain into the hoosegow for suspicion of spousal abuse.

• **June 17:** At 9:45 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana police rounded up a 52-year-old model citizen with a felony arrest warrant and tossed him into the pokey where such cretins belong.

• **June 16:** Police contacted a swizzle stick stirring up trouble at 6:37 p.m. in the 800 block of Main. Logs indicated a 44-year-old Mamaluke was nicked for suspicion of being blotto where the tourists can see him.

• **June 16:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 3 p.m. at State Park Road and South Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the driver, 31, was nicked for suspicion of

Rock to Pier Run Returns for 53rd Annual Run with Half Marathon in Morro Bay

The Brian Waterbury 53rd Annual Rock to Pier Run will return to Morro Bay on July 22, this year featuring the half-marathon for the first time since 2019. Our local Morro Bay gym, Fitness Works, will lead a pre-race warmup to boost the energy of runners before the run begins at 9:00am. Participants will then enjoy the beautiful scenery as they go from the Morro Bay "Rock" beach area to the Cayucos Pier on the hard-packed sand. For those not completing the half-marathon run back to the rock, transportation will be back to the event area. Participants and

driving on a toot.

• **June 16:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 11:30 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana apparently at the Creek Bed Estates. The 40-year-old hype was arrested on suspicion of possessing methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia and tossed into the gaol.

• **June 16:** At 9:35 a.m. police contacted another model citizen, 54, in the Creek Bed Estates on Quintana Road and he was cited and released on one bench warrant, 'cause here they throw back the little ones.

• **June 16:** Police responded at 9 a.m. to Rite Aid on Quintana for a reported shoplifter, apparently in custody. Logs indicated a 22-year-old sticky-fingered woman was charged with suspicion of grand theft for having stolen more than \$950 worth of merchandise, as apparently her math skills ain't up to snuff.

• **June 15:** Police responded at 7:34 p.m. to Harbor and Napa for a reported hit-n-split. Logs indicated a driver backed a black Honda Element into a parked white Lexus and then hit the gas without waiting around to exchange insurance info (she no doubt didn't have none).

• **June 15:** A little after 1 p.m. police contacted a regular customer, 30, somewhere on Main Street who had five bench warrants. Naturally, they issued him another disappearance ticket, as he was apparently not worth the gas to drive to jail.

• **June 15:** Must be summer... Someone turned in a cell phone they found somewhere on the beach. Police have it now.

• **June 15:** Police contacted a repeat customer, 65, at 9:47 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana no doubt by the soon-to-be Creekside Bungalows. She had eight bench warrants but according to logs, she went to jail because she was allegedly numb 'n dumb with rum.

• **June 15:** Someone reported something they found somewhere in the 700 block of Quintana and no doubt abandoned by some nillionaire squit. Earlier at 3 a.m. police came across a motorcycle in the same area of Quintana and towed it away because the DMV hadn't been fed in over 6 months, in this week's example of why we need SWAT.

• **June 13:** At 9:09 p.m. police responded to a drunken disturbance in the 1000 block of Main. Logs indicated they hooked up a 22-year-old borracho and tossed his culito into el carcel.

• **June 14:** Some petty thief committed petty theft in the 600 block of Piney Way and a task force will no doubt be formed to find the scoundrel.

• **June 14:** Police contacted a suspicious subject in the 300 block of Embarcadero at 6:12 a.m., and the 51-year-old night owl (early bird?) was nicked for suspicion of possessing drug paraphernalia, which might explain why he was creepin' about at that hour.

• **June 13:** Police responded at 1:30 p.m. to the 600 block of Morro Bay Blvd. for a reported theft. Logs indicated a 40-year-old man was arrested for suspicion of second degree (strong arm) robbery; and a 26-year-old woman was caught allegedly shoplifting. He went to the hoosegow but she was cited and released, in yet another example of a two-tiered justice system at play.

• **June 13:** Police responded at 5:10 a.m. to a report of a deceased subject in the 700 block of Pacific.

families will then wind down for a post-race breakfast and music by the "Garden Party" band. The Central Valley Timing Company will track runners' times, with prizes awarded to top finishers from a variety of age groups. For more information, go to the City of Morro Bay website at

www.morrobayca.gov where you can find links to register at our runsignup.com registration listing. We hope you join in and enjoy the wonderful atmosphere at this year's Rock to Pier!

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# Community

## New Coaches at Morro Bay High

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay High will have two new coaches when school starts again in September. Athletic Director Tyler Hoyt announced that he’s hired new baseball and cross country coaches, which also marks the return of a legendary MBHS runner. **New Harriers Coach**

Jennifer Frere (nee: Jennifer Lacovara), will return to her alma mater to lead the Pirates’ Cross Country teams. If her maiden name sounds familiar, it should. Jennifer Lacovara won a State Cross Country Championship while at Morro Bay High, one of only two female athletes to win a State Title in any sport. (The other was Shayla Balandine in the pole vault.)

A.D. Hoyt said Frere, “is an experienced runner and Anatomy and Biology teacher at MBHS. She ran Cross Country and Track for MBHS under the direction of Cary Nerelli and won the State Cross Country meet her senior year. “Her school records for the 1600 meters (5-minutes 7-seconds); 3200m (11:09); and for the Woodward Park course (17:57) still stand today.” The State Cross Country Championships are held the last



Cal Poly alumnus and 5-time All American, Jennifer Frere (nee: Lacovara) is the new cross country coach at Morro Bay High School. Submitted photos

Saturday in November at Woodward Park, which is in Clovis. She went on to run for Cal Poly where the Cross Country Team won its 11th straight NCAA Div. II National Championship. Her individual accomplishments were many. “She was a 5-time All-American in Cross Country and Track,” A.D. Hoyt said, “with personal bests of 9:45 for the 3000m and 17:04 for the 5000m. Coach Frere is excited to help athletes meet their running goals and build on team successes.”

She’d likely give them a run for their money too. Coach Frere will replace Chuck Ogle, who led the Pirates cross country teams for many years after Coach Nerelli left to coach women’s basketball at Hancock College in Santa Maria. For A.D. Hoyt, it’s special to see a former Pirate coming home. “As a fellow Morro Bay cross country alumnus,” he said, “I could not be more excited to have one of our own taking the helm for the years to come. This year’s program stands to be very strong, and I look forward to seeing it grow with Coach Frere.”

The Pirates will host their annual Invitational Cross Country Meet on Saturday, Sept. 9 at the high school. Dozens of the top cross country programs in the state will be on hand to take on the challenge of the Pirates’ home course, which includes runs through loose sand onto the beach and features numerous changes in surfaces — from grass, to dirt, artificial track, pavement, sand and back on dirt again. It’s considered one of the toughest cross country courses anywhere.

### New Baseball Coach

A.D. Hoyt said he’s hired Jarred Zill as the new head baseball coach. “Jarred is a 2019 Cal Poly Alumnus,” A.D. Hoyt said, “where he played for the Mustangs. He pitched in the weekend starting rotation all four years in college. “During his final two years he was the Friday night guy.” During his career at Cal Poly, Zill pitched 179 innings over 45 appearances; had four seasons of pitching to a 3.50 ERA or lower; and also earned Cal Poly’s “Mike Krukow Outstanding Pitcher Honors” in 2016, Hoyt said.



Former Cal Poly pitcher, Jarred Zill, is the new baseball coach at Morro Bay High School.

Over his collegiate career, Zill posted 10 wins and recorded 166 strikeouts, Hoyt said. Now, Zill is one of the owners of a baseball training and instruction company. “As co-owner of BPA Central,” A.D. Hoyt said, “he delivers elite baseball instruction and training to the area’s youth. Jarred grew up playing elite baseball in the BPA organization as well, starting at age 9.” Coach Zill credits this early, specialized coaching for his success on the mound. Zill played baseball at Capistrano Valley High School and graduated in 2014. Cap Valley High is “one of the top programs in the Southern Section” of CIF, Hoyt explained. “During his tenure there, he was in the starting rotation. When he wasn’t pitching, he played third base.” After high school, Zill was recruited by San Jose State and San Francisco State Universities but chose Cal Poly. In 2021, he returned to his alma mater (CVHS) as the pitching coach. But he soon moved back to SLO County, where he married his best friend, Katie, and then opened his own baseball training business. “Currently,” A.D. Hoyt said, “Jarred coaches youth baseball and provides private baseball lessons. During the summer months, he takes high school level players on a college tour, giving players exposure to coaches and other passionate baseball players.” Hoyt likes his new coach’s approach to the game. Zill “takes leadership incredibly seriously,” A.D. Hoyt said. “Through baseball, he teaches discipline, respect, and responsibility. He strives for excellence and expects players to do the same in all they do. Baseball is his vehicle to teach players to act responsibly in all facets of their lives.” He will use baseball to teach about life. “Through lessons from the game,” A.D. Hoyt said, “Coach Zill will guide student athletes to reach their academic goals, to always be a positive example and an elite representation of their school and of themselves.” The A.D. who when school starts again will begin in his second year leading Pirates’ athletics, said his new baseball coach wants to loop in local youth sports leagues, something he personally believes in too. “As an athletic director,” A.D. Hoyt said, “Jarred’s capacity to both coach our high school team and foster youth baseball opportunities on the coast is incredibly exciting. I am looking forward to seeing Morro Bay Baseball grow and thrive in the years to come because of this unique capacity.” On another sports note, A.D. Hoyt said the school’s Girls’ Water Polo Club was planning to go to Italy to play some water polo. The Water Polo Club Team consists of the school’s girl’s water polo players, but competes outside the school’s official team sport.

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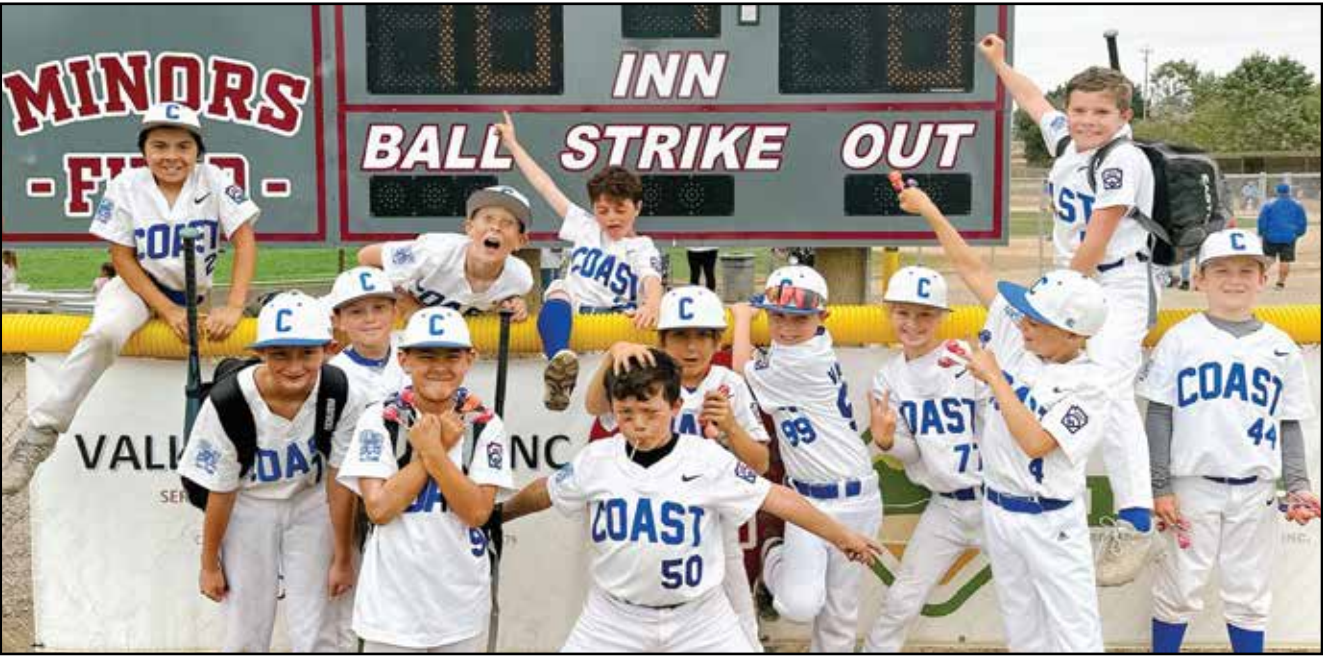
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July 13 - July 26, 2023 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News



# Community

## Coast Little League Makes it to Finals



Pictured are - Rear fence: Eli Dragotta, Sutter Wiebe, Charlie Laurie, and Hayden Coate  
Front: Stiles Vanbuskirk, Louis Deovlet, Skylar Brown, Cavan McLeod, Xavier Vitale, Caden Van Zee, Miles Chaney, Jacob Dalton and Ayden Monie. Photo submitted

A group of ballplayers came home with second place honors, the highest ranking in tournament play in team history.

The Coast Little League Tournament of Stars (8-10 year-olds) All Star team advanced to the District 65 championship game on Tuesday, June 27 against the Orcutt National Tournament of Stars All Star team. It was a hard-fought game with Coast coming up short in the end, but it capped off a great tournament run.

This was the first time a Coast Little League

TOS team made it to the District-65 finals. It was also the first of any Coast Little League All Star team to advance this far since 2019. The team ended their All-Star season with a record of 5-2 with their only losses coming against the eventual champions, Orcutt National. They beat teams representing Atascadero, Arroyo Grande, Orcutt American and Lompoc on their way to the second-place finish.

The Coast Little League Fall baseball season starts in early September with registration starting July 15 at [coastll.com](http://coastll.com).

## Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Who doesn't love a spicy bite? Spicy food represents that thin line that separates pleasure from pain. After the first bite you start feeling your lips and tongue catch on fire, your eyes start watering but for some reason, you can't turn away. Some of us want to be challenged by spiciness, to the point of sweating and gasping.

The range of fiery, delicious dishes is as broad as the culinary heritage of the world. Most cuisines utilize spice in different ways. To celebrate the cultural and gastronomic diversity of spicy expressions, the vendors of the SLO Public Market have come together to create the hottest day of the year.

On July 22 the SLO Public Market is "Bringin' on the Heat." Participant vendors will sell their small but hot creations inspired by each cuisine they represent.

- Participating vendors are:**
- Baht
  - Bing's Bao Buns
  - Bottlecraft
  - Brooks Burgers
  - Central Coast Creamery
  - Humble Oven
  - Jay Bird's
  - Night Shift Cookie Co
  - Perfect Scoop
  - Plant Pub
  - Rambling Spirits
  - The Neighborhood
  - The Perfect Scoop
  - Todo Buen
  - Veg on the Edge

In addition to these delicacies The SLO General Store will be hosting a raffle with a selection of local spicy treats. Orange Theory will be hosting a "Burn before the Burn" workout (RSVP required) and Nexus will host a spicy Latin dance class in the market's courtyard.

The heat goes down at the SLO Public Market, 3845 S Higuera St. Free Entry and Free Parking

While reservations are not required, they are highly encouraged to help the vendors prepare. RSVP at <https://bit.ly/3rlneHh>.

...

Help make 20 new scarecrows in just one day to celebrate the 15th year of the Cambria Scarecrow Festival on Aug. 5, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cambria Grammar School.

Participants can work alone or bring a friend and work together to create your very own scarecrow. Your creation will add artistic whimsy to Cambria in the month of October. All materials to build and

Events Continued on page 12

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Community

Events From page 11



create a scarecrow are provided. However, you are welcome to bring any items such as hats, sunglasses, fancy buttons, clothes, or outfits, which will add your special touch to your scarecrow.

Sara Blair-Field will demonstrate how to create and sew a soft sculpture face. Organizers will provide water, soda, chips, and candy. You provide your lunch, creative genius, and readiness to have fun. Register on-line at [cambriascarecrows.com](http://cambriascarecrows.com). A waiting list will be established once the workshop is full and participants placed on the wait list will be contacted if a space becomes available.

...



Get ready to be transported to Paris for the day - no passport or plane tickets required. Celebrate Bastille Day and French Heritage at the Dallidet Adobe & Gardens on Saturday July 15 from 11:30 to 3 p.m. - lunch will be served at noon

The menu is fine French cuisine, featuring vegetables from the Dallidet garden as well as French wine and cheeses.

The gardens will glow with the sound of live music by the incomparable Brynn Albanese, who will

bring her unique French Gypsy style.

In the raffle, take a chance on winning a one-of-a-kind turned wooden bowl by local master wood turner Barry Lundgren, made from a piece of a Blackwood Acacia tree that lived on the property and was taken down last year. The bowl is 11 inches across and 3½ inches tall. Tickets to the event are \$75 and raffle tickets are \$10 each. For more information and to register, go to [historycenterslo.org/bastille.html](http://historycenterslo.org/bastille.html).

...

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

- Acrylic Paint Marbling for Teens – Thursday, July 20, 1- 2 p.m. Teens! Come and join Susana as we learn with Creativebug on the technique of acrylic marbling. Create a one-of-a-kind piece to take home! Ages 12-18
- Book Discussion – Thursday, July 20, 5:30-6:45 p.m. Discussion is “Codebreaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene editing, and the future of the human race” by Walter Isaacson. No need to sign up ahead of time. Just show up! Call the library for details.
- Coloring and Texture – Friday, July 21, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Drop by the Los Osos Library to create colorful art with textured rubbing plates! All kids welcome.
- Xtreme Science Magic with Don O’Brien – Saturday, July 22, 11-12 p.m. Xtreme Science Magic Show is a fast-moving, interactive, upbeat show that mixes entertainment with information. Kids will not forget Don O’Brien’s interactive presentation! Ages 3 and up.
- Keva Blocks & GeoMags – Friday, July 28, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Come to the Los Osos Library and play with Keva Blocks! Build your own creations and have lots of fun. School age.
- Floral Wine Glass Painting with Spencer Collins – Saturday, July 29, 10-11:30 a.m. Join artist Spencer Collins for this free, fun art class! In this class, students use enamel paint on wine glasses to create colorful tulips. All supplies will be provided. Space is limited. Registration required. For adults.
- Teen Crafternoon – Saturday, July 29, 2-4 p.m. Make tiny ice cream cone pins out of felt and pom-poms. All materials provided! For ages 11-18.



The Morro Bay White Caps Community Band summer series free concerts are in full swing. Under the baton of conductor Brenda Hascall the band will entertain the community with pops, jazz, and classical music. Concerts take place on the South T-Pier on Saturday July 15, Aug 5, and September 9 from 11 a.m. to 1p.m.

Photo Credit Suzanne Mustafa and Brenda Hascall

...

Call for artists. In partnership with SLO County Arts, California State Parks Association and the Western Monarch Trail are thrilled to host the Through the Eyes of a Monarch art show. The exhibit takes place during the month of September at The Bunker SLO in support of CCSPA and the Western Monarch Trail. SLO County Arts is currently inviting people of all ages to submit art inspired by the migration of the western monarch. The show seeks to highlight not only the beauty of the monarch but also to introduce the struggles the monarchs and many other pollinators face. Climate change, habitat loss and pesticides are affecting our smallest yet very important species on earth. You can tell the story of the monarch with your art “through the eyes/lens of a monarch” in whatever way speaks to you as an artist. Is it the beauty of the migration, in the midst of a cluster of monarchs? Or it may be the destruction they see to their habitat through climate change, fires and habitat loss. Perhaps you envision the future of increased habitat and returning numbers? The western monarch butterfly population. All applications are due by July 28, 2023. View Submission guidelines at <https://centralcoastparks.org/art-show/>

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Scott Yoo and Ryan Lawrence lead a family friendly performance of Aaron Copland’s ballet Appalachian Spring at Cuesta Performing Arts Center on July 22, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. This concert is open for all ages will last under one hour without an intermission. All tickets \$5; children sitting on a lap do not need a ticket. For mor einformation and to get tickets, go to festivalmozaic.org.

Bring the kids out to the CPAC at 10 a.m. to try playing a variety of musical instruments at the SLO Symphony’s Instrument Petting Zoo.

Free upcoming July programs at the Morro Bay Library - 625 Harbor St, (805) 772-6394.

- Pacific Wildlife Care – Tuesday, July 18, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- The Pacific Wildlife Care team is bringing some animal friends to the Los Osos Library! Come meet an American kestrel, a Virginia opossum and a raven.
- Coloring and Texture Art - Wednesday, July 19, 3:00-5:00
- Drop by the Morro Bay Library to create colorful art with textured rubbing plates! All kids welcome.
- Teen Crafternoon - Saturday, July 22, 2 – 4 p.m.
- Make tiny ice cream cone pins out of felt and pompoms. All materials provided! For ages 11-18.
- Bubble Zone! – Tuesday, July 25, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Bubbles: not just for storytime. Come make bubbles on the patio with Susana.
- Keva Blocks and GeoMags – Wednesday, July 26, 3:00-5:00
- Come to the Morro Bay Library and play with

Keva Blocks! Engineer your own creations and have lots of fun. All kids welcome.



Living in California means that residents need to be ready for wildfire. The City of San Luis Obispo has the information and tools needed to get prepared and will be offering a Wildfire Readiness night open to all.

San Luis Obispo Wildfire Readiness Night takes place Thursday 6/22 at the Library Community Room, 995 Palm St. from 6-7:30 p.m.

Participants will hear from experts at the San Luis Obispo City Fire Department and receive a printed copy of the “Ready, Set, Go!” Personal Wildfire Action Guide.

The City’s Fire Chief, Fire Marshall, and Emergency Manager will present important wildfire and emergency readiness information to the community and will answer questions, helping attendees:

1. Get READY by preparing your home and property for wildfires.
2. Get SET by creating household evacuation and communication plans.
3. And Go! by knowing when it’s time to evacuate.

For more information on the event and wildfire readiness, go to [www.slocity.org/wildfire](http://www.slocity.org/wildfire) and follow the Fire Department on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

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

# OUT & ABOUT

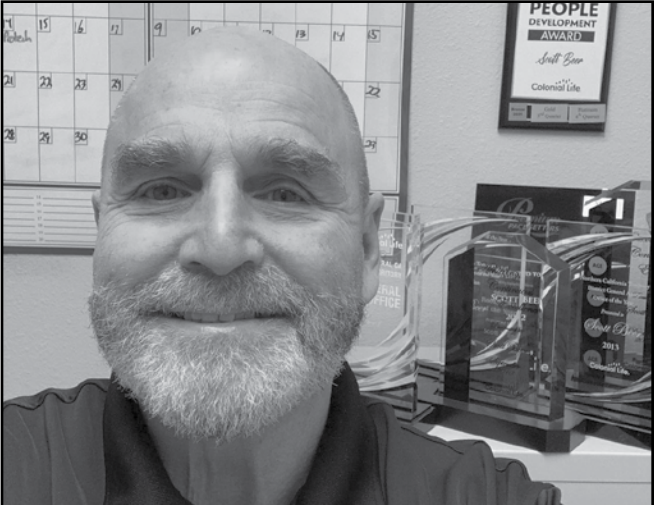
WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

Scott Beer, Poetry

By Judy Salamacha



Scott Beer in his office in Cayucos. Photo submitted

In between his busy schedule meeting clients to lsecure benefits for their employees, Scott Beer of Cayucos enjoys writing poetry. It comes to him naturally. Several of his poems were inspired while serving in the U.S. Navy. Scott has never tried to publish. It’s not why he writes.

We reconnected right before Memorial Day. It had been years since he followed me as Morro Bay Rotary president. He shared one of his poems and the inspiration behind it. He wrote, “Buddy was born in 1900. I met him in 1983. I had asked him what an old man was afraid of? I was 24 or 25. He replied ‘Well, back in WWII when that yellow Western Union bicycle came around the corner with the rider staring straight ahead, people put their hands over their hearts and

Out and About Continued on page 14

## 10 WAYS TO REDUCE ENERGY AND SAVE MONEY

#4

#7

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Community

Out and About From page 1



Rotarians honoring Armed Forces memers Colonel Chuck Clarke, Rick Grantham, Galen Brunner and Scott Beer, MB Rotary President 2007-08. Photo submitted

whisked inside. They wanted to give whoever was the recipient of the telegram some privacy and respect. They certainly hoped they passed your home. They were delivering a telegram from the Department of Defense that started with We regret to inform you. The telegram informed them when and where their loved one had lost their life in service of our country.” Scott loved being in the Nav. “I volunteered for everything, including bereavement duty. I soon found out I didn’t have the courage.” It was after he was pall bearer for a friend and shipmate that he recalled Buddy’s words and wrote this poem on his 7-hour drive home. “I can feel it to this day 32 years later. We lost a brother and friend and although everyone tried to stand tall and brave, we unleashed the feelings we tried to hide.”

The knock on the door  
Was so soft and faint,  
Deliberately quiet  
With intentional restraint.

The black sedan  
Parked out in the road,  
To deliver a message  
The reason we’d rode.

Our hearts were heavy.  
Our trembling restrained,  
“Maintain your bearing.”  
We’d constantly trained.

The footsteps approaching  
Were so soft and light,

“Who’s at my door  
At this time of the night?”  
  
Our throats had been cleared  
When she opened the door.  
She must have been wondering  
What was this all for?

With no words exchanged  
You could see in her eyes.  
She knew in a moment  
As she pleaded for lies.  
  
As she gazed at our uniforms,  
Just stood there in shock.  
“Please tell me he’s fine,  
My son is my rock!”

“We regret to inform you  
That he’s indeed lost his life”  
The words barely escaped  
And they cut like a knife.

There aren’t any words  
That could ease all the pain,  
So out of respect  
Their memories remain.

We’ve heard the cliché  
How “some gave all.”  
It’s been sung to the heavens,  
And engraved on a wall.

Please take a moment  
And think of those lost.  
It was their selfless acts.  
And their lives were the cost.

To the loved ones remaining  
And the pain that you’ve endured,  
It hurts like your heart  
Has been literally skewered.

We owe you a debt  
That could never be paid.  
A loss that’s so heavy  
It just can’t be weighed.

To those hurting inside  
This we must say,  
We dedicate to you  
This Memorial Day.

I know you will agree Scott’s inspiration and words are worthy of publication whether Memorial Day, Independence Day, Pearl Harbor Day, or Veterans Day.

Takin’ Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Cal Poly College of Engineering Graduates Win Big at CSU Startup Competition



Emily Gavrilenko, center, who graduated in December with a master’s in computer science, won first prize and \$25,000 for her business Ryde during the Sunstone CSU Startup Launch Competition at San Jose State University.

Two engineering entrepreneurs from Cal Poly won a combined \$35,000 for their emerging businesses – Ryde and X-Adapt – during the inaugural California State University startup launch competition on May 5 at San Jose State University.

The Sunstone CSU Startup Launch Competition is a groundbreaking partnership between the CSU system and Sunstone Management – an international investment firm based in Long Beach – designed to support and fund innovative startups created by CSU students.

Emily Gavrilenko, of Antioch, California, who graduated in December with a master’s in computer science, won first prize and \$25,000 in the service track for her business Ryde – a carpooling marketplace that allows college students in California to buy and sell empty seats in their car.

Evan Lalanne, of Arroyo Grande, California, who graduated in December with a bachelor’s in manu-

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facturing engineering, placed second in the product track, winning \$10,000 for X-Adapt – a modified electric unicycle that allows people with disabilities to access rough terrain like hiking trails.



Evan Lalanne, seated, who graduated in December with a bachelor’s in manufacturing engineering, placed second during the Sunstone CSU Startup Launch Competition at San Jose State University. He won \$10,000 for his business X-Adapt. Photos courtesy of Sunstone CSU Startup Launch Competition

Thirty-six teams from 18 CSU campuses competed in the only competition of its kind that focuses on rewarding the business acumen of CSU entrepreneurs.

The contest required participants to make an 8-minute pitch before a panel of judges followed by a question-and-answer session, according to Gavrilenko.

“I was more nervous for the award ceremony than the competition itself because I wanted to call and tell my co-founders that we had won first place,” she said.

Once Gavrilenko was indeed named the top winner in her track, she called co-founders Johnny Morris, an experience industry management graduate, and Josh Wong, a computer science senior, to tell them the good news.

“We were all screaming together on the phone,” she said.

The trio founded Ryde in January 2022 to connect California college students who are traveling in the same direction so they can travel hundreds of miles, affordably and comfortably, according to Gavrilenko.

“We’ve built a community of riders and drivers, and we want to be the go-to travel option for college students,” she said.

The Ryde website launched in March 2022 and became available on the App Store in October 2022. By March 2023, users could download the app on Google Play. More than 3,500 Cal Poly students, or 16% of the campus community, have signed up for Ryde and have collectively traveled more than 500,000 miles.

Since October, Gavrilenko, Morris and Wong have been part of the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship’s incubator program, which helps early-stage companies develop into financially stable, high-growth enterprises by supplying tools, training and infrastructure.

Funds from the Sunstone CSU Startup Launch Competition will pay for marketing efforts, incentive programs and product development. One of the new features will be a rating system similar to Airbnb’s five-star system and a profile redesign, according to Gavrilenko.

She added Ryde will expand to another California college in the fall, with more campuses to follow.

“SLO is a great community for starting a company, and I think we can go far,” she said.

Name Your Price Dog Adoption Fees

Woods Humane Society hopes to help more dogs get out of kennels, into homes, and on to summer adventures with the flexible adoption fee promotion, Adopt Your Adventure Buddy. Through July 17, adopters can pick their own price (SLO County dog license, \$31, not included) for the adoption fee of any dog over five months of age.



“This time of year, especially following the 4th of July holiday, shelters across the region see an influx of stray dogs entering their kennels and are in even more need of our help to transport and find loving homes for adoptable canines,” says Woods Humane Society CEO Emily L’Heureux. “Meanwhile, due to the busy summer travel season, dog adoptions tend to decrease this time of year, leaving us with less capacity to accept intakes than we’d like.”

L’Heureux says that many of the dogs available for adoption at Woods are born adventure partners, eager to run, play, and frolic in the sun with their forever families. “The summer is an incredible time to bond with a newly adopted dog, and we hope that offering a flexible adoption fee during our Adopt Your Adventure Buddy promotion will encourage local families to consider inviting a dog into their homes and on their outdoor excursions this summer, and beyond.”

Adult dog adoption fees at Woods Humane Society are regularly \$150. All adoptable pets have been spayed/neutered, vaccinated, microchipped, and treated for parasites. Adoptions come with a free health check at a local veterinary clinic and the option to enroll in a month of complimentary pet insurance.

To see Woods’ adoptable dogs, or for more information about Woods, go to [www.WoodsHumane.org](http://www.WoodsHumane.org). Woods Humane Society is located at 875 Oklahoma Ave., San Luis Obispo, and at 2300 Ramona Rd., Atascadero and can be reached by telephone at (805) 534-9316.

Post-Pandemic Customer Support Offered by PG&E

In response to COVID-19, PG&E implemented a series of emergency protections for customers including a moratorium on energy service disconnections. While disconnections for non-payment have resumed, the company continues working with customers having difficulty paying their bills by providing assistance and payment plans to avoid disconnection.

PG&E distributed more than \$540 million in relief to residential customers as part of two rounds of funding from the California Arrearage Payment Program. The company also launched the Arrearage Management Plan, which helps qualifying customers reduce unpaid balances through on-time payment and debt forgiveness. Customers can check eligibility by logging in to their PG&E account at [pge.com](http://pge.com) or calling 800-743-5000.

PG&E has flexibility to extend bill due dates or

arrange for a flexible payment plan. All customers are eligible to enroll in a 12-month pay plan, and participants who remain current on their plans are protected from collections and having their service interrupted for non-payment. Customers interested in extending their due date or arranging a pay plan are encouraged to visit [pge.com](http://pge.com) or call 877-660-6789.

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Letter To The Editor



Council Roundabout Vote Shows Lack of Trust

Just as the never-ending expenses on the sewer plant haunted former Morro Bay mayor Headheading out of office, council members Edwards’ and Ford’s votes for a roundabout at 41/1/Main will make it difficult for them to be re-elected, beginning with Ford a year from now.

You can’t make a motion and second the motion to put our children’s safety at risk, then expect voters to put you back in office. You can’t make a motion and second the motion to give residents another 2-3 years of construction and torn up streets, then expect voters to put you back in office. You can’t make a motion and second the motion for another public works project that will drain City coffers away from repairing streets and supporting fire fighters, then expect voters to put you back in office.

Council member Barton demonstrated independence when she did not participate in the voice vote.

The vote on the 41/1/Main intersection highlighted the lack of trust among the city council members. The two members who live near the intersection voted against the roundabout. Those members who do not use the intersection on a daily basis voted for the roundabout; they were not willing to trust the testimony of their peers who had personal knowledge.

Betty Winboltz  
Morro Bay

Letter to the Editor Policy

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



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Community

Budget From page 1

meetings, and it was finalized at the Council’s June 13 meeting, well before the June 30 deadline to have a budget passed by July 1, the start of the fiscal year.

The \$56 million is an increase of 3.5% increase over last year’s budget, due mostly to rising personnel costs and inflation.

Bottom line though, is the budget is balanced and every fund has a healthy surplus.

“The budget,” Johnson-Rios said, “makes key investments in operations, City staff, capital improvements, and paying down pension liabilities, while also preserving healthy financial reserves to weather future emergencies and economic downturns.”

Those healthy reserves collectively in the various funds top \$14.5 million, which sets the City in a good place to weather the coming economic storms and the weather-related ones, too.

Though each reserve fund is built up differently and intended for specific needs, the City Council on a four-fifths vote can expend any of it on whatever it wants.

And it’s last winter’s fierce storms that caused so much damage in town that’s helping to drive the infrastructure spending, with 31 projects on the City’s menu.

The \$56 million budget includes \$36.6 million for operations and \$19.5 million for capital improvements, Johnson-Rios said in a news release. The general rule of thumb in Morro Bay is that about 79%-80% of spending is for employee salaries and benefits.

Indeed, the City Council also approved a new salary schedule for its various employee job categories and also allocated money to hire a full time Public Works Inspector after a June 2022 experiment with the position was deemed successful.

“The position’s primary goal,” the report said, “is to ensure that projects in the public right of way and public infrastructure projects were safe, high quality, and consistent with specifications and regulations.”

The trial program wherein the Consolidated Maintenance Field Supervisor assumed the inspector’s role, “demonstrated both the employee’s competence as a Public Works Inspector and the City’s need for the role,” reads a budget staff report from June 13. The new inspector job pays from \$76,100 on the low end to a high of \$92,500, according to the Council’s Resolution approving the creation of the position.

The inspector’s job was created at the same salary as the maintenance supervisor, so the City said there’s no net increase to its personnel costs.

The budget predicts revenues next year from taxes, which are the main sources of money for the City’s General Fund, will top \$17.5 million and comes in under limits placed on spending by Prop. 4, aka the Gann Initiative Limits, which are calculated using cost of living and population figures.

The City’s Gann Limit is more than \$32 million, so the \$17.5 million in “taxes” is less than 50% of what it could be.

As far as revenues go, highlights include: \$5.3 million in property taxes; \$7.2 million in sales taxes; \$4.4 million in bed taxes; \$674,000 in franchise fees; \$577,000 in licenses and permit fees; \$1.5 million in “intergovernmental revenues;” \$119,000 in fines and forfeitures; \$22 million from City-provided services; and \$25.6 million in “interfund revenue transfers,” much of that to pay for the City’s Water Reclamation Facility or WRF project.

All told, the City’s is predicting total revenues to top \$71.5 million. According to the budget document, “The City’s major revenue sources, particularly

those tied to discretionary spending and tourism, had shown strong signs of recovery to pre-pandemic levels but are now flattening.”

While revenues are flattening out, expenditures jumped by 5.1% over last year, according to the budget document and will hit \$81.5 million. But cut out the WRF transfers and the net expenditures are \$56.1 million (a 3.5% increase), which means the budget is balanced, provided the revenue projections are spot on.

And while it appears there’s a \$10 million gap between revenues and expenditures, the budget covers that. “The portion of the expenditure budget that is not covered by current-year revenues reflects the use of available fund balances to cover the costs of one-time capital improvement projects in FY 2023-24.”

So while the money for such CIPs may have been budgeted in a prior year or years, they don’t go into the balance sheet until the project is actually done.

Of the major fund expenditures, the General Funds makes up 28.9% of the total; the sewer operating fund is 17.8%; the water operating fund 11.5%; and Measures Q and E sales taxes is 7%.

Big ticket items with expenditures are the General Fund at \$23.4 million; risk management at \$1.6 million; American Rescue Plan at \$1.6M; IT Fund at \$1M; Measures Q&E at \$5.7M; government impact fees at \$1M; sewer operating fund at \$14.4M; the Harbor Fund at \$2.5M; and the CIP Fund at \$5.2M.

With individual departmental budgets, Public Works at \$13.5M; \$5.6M for police; \$3.9M fire department; \$2.2M for Administration services; %2M for Community Development (planning); \$1.2M for the City Manager’s Office; \$26.6M for “non-departmental” which are the interfund transfers within the City; and \$19.7M for CIP.

To further explain this accounting and dispel thoughts of a shell game being played, the budget explains that “Since City Council must approve all City budgets by fund, the transfers must be budgeted for and approved in each annual budget. Interfund transfers appear in the “Nondepartmental” category of the budget.

“Most annual transfers occur for the following purposes: Capital Improvement Project contributions; Emergency Reserve Contributions; Cost Allocation Plan transfers to compensate the General Fund for support to the Enterprise Funds; IT and Risk Fund contributions for city-wide internal services and program support; and other revenue and expenditures that occur to support the operations of the City.

Since the mid-1990s, the City (and all local governments in California) have been allowed to charge for services rendered like Human Resources, accounting/payroll, legal and administration, hence the interfund transfers.

Of note the Measure E sales tax increase (at 1%) was predicted to raise \$2M a year when the City analyzed the measure for the 2020 ballot. And Measure Q had been raking in about \$1M a year (at one-half percent) since it was passed in 2006, but combined the two are predicted to bring in over \$4.5M in the next budget.

They’ve budgeted \$2.1 million for street repairs, she said, adding that it was more than the usual million or so the City has available for that work. The main revenue sources for street repairs are the Measure Q and E sales taxes (1.5%) and State and Federal allocations out of the gas taxes.

The CIP projects list includes \$13.8 million in water and sewer capital infrastructure projects,” Johnson-Rios said, “with \$6.8 million for the final components of the Water Reclamation Facility Project

and the remainder for crucial sewer main replacement work and other priority utilities projects.”

Back in 2005, the City Council approved a series of five annual sewer rate increases that was supposed to begin tackling the many needs for the City’s aging collection system. Evidence of the system’s issues surfaced when a sewer line running from the Cloisters under Hwy 1 broke and spilled raw sewage onto the ground.

The CIP budget includes money for repairing sidewalks in the Downtown district, replacing street trees that were taken out or knocked down in storms, work on the Vet’s Hall that has needed a new roof for several years, repairs to storm drains (also a priority with Measure Q), and remodeling the living quarters at the Fire Department’s Bonita Street Station. She also noted the City plans to replace trash and recycling cans out along the streets.

“The budget also funds action items to achieve the Strategic Planning goals established by the City Council,” Johnson-Rios said, “including: Improving public infrastructure, Achieving economic vitality, Addressing housing needs and homelessness response, and Improving community engagement.”

Speaking about the homeless, the City and County are going in on a County hatched idea to put up a group of tiny homes on vacant lot on Quintana Road to get people living in an around Willow Camp Creek into some sort of housing, albeit one that is just 100 square feet.

The County applied for a \$5 million State grant for that temporary housing project.

After the Coronavirus Pandemic, the City has recovered from any revenue drop offs but that’s it. “The City,” Johnson-Rios said, “has largely recovered from the economic impacts of the pandemic although recent events related to storm damage and national economic cooling have negatively impacted our financial situation.

“The City’s major revenue sources, particularly those tied to discretionary spending and tourism, had recovered to pre-pandemic levels but are now flattening.”

Measure E, approved in 2020 by voters, adding a 1% local sales tax to pay for police and fire services, continues to be a wise investment.

“Measure E,” Johnson-Rios said, “continues to support the City’s ability to deliver core public safety services and make progress toward addressing infrastructure needs, though infrastructure needs continue to exceed funds available.”

She added that the budget also has \$1 million for, “a pension trust fund to help lower the City’s pension liability.”

The budget is available online to the public and Johnson-Rios said is in an interactive format, see: [www.morrobayca.gov/827/Budget](http://www.morrobayca.gov/827/Budget).

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cheapest to maintain over the long haul.

City Clerk Dana Swanson told Estero Bay News that the council vote was split 3-2 with Mayor Carla Wixom and Councilwoman Zara Landrum voting against the roundabout option.

“Council moved to recommend the roundabout alternative to Caltrans for approval,” Swanson told EBN, “and, if approved, direct City staff to begin design phase and pursue additional funding opportunities for the project.

“Additionally, [they] recommend staff include simulation and educational materials for both motorist and pedestrian use in the design phase, and cap the

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Community

City’s funding at \$2.5 Million to unlock SLOCOG funding.” SLOCOG is the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments and is the countywide agency that disperses Federal and State roads monies to the County and the various cities, Morro Bay included.

SLOCOG has been putting away money for this intersection for many years and as of a May public meeting on the matter, had some \$6 million put away for a roundabout. But current estimates for that project are from \$8 million to \$12 million, with the City expected to cover much, if not all, of the shortfall.

By comparison, traffic signals were estimated at \$4 million to \$6 million and SLOCOG has about half of that available for signal lights.

A roundabout, despite concerns about pedestrian and cyclists’ safety, has always been the preferred solution to an intersection that is currently performing at efficiency level “C” and could within 10 years drop to an “F” rating in terms of handling heavy loads of traffic.

Indeed, that intersection loads up and bogs down every school day with kids and staff going to and from Morro Bay high before and after school.

It also loads up whenever the Cuesta Grade (Hwy 101) is blocked by an accident or shut down for maintenance. Those occasions send tons of traffic down Hwy 1 to Hwy 41 to get to North County, turning the intersection into a choke point and backing up Hwy 1 traffic on the off ramps, nearly into the highway lanes of traffic.

Also, Hwy 41 is one of the main entrances to town, especially for folks coming here from the Central Valley and can load up traffic at any time during the summer.

The City has had a consultant, GHD, working on the issue and the worldwide engineering firm is expected to now start working on actual designs for a roundabout.

But if you think it was an easy decision to make, consider that the City Council received numerous letters of concern — most favoring stoplights and against a roundabout — signaling a somewhat divided citizenry.

And council members themselves had a tough time reaching a conclusion to the matter, resulting in the split vote.

Indeed, the decision was first scheduled for June 13 but that meeting went long with council questions and was shelved until the June 27 meeting, when they finally voted on their preferred project.

The City staff will now also begin the hunt for more grant monies. At the May public meeting, Public Works Director, Greg Kwolek said they would look to other grant programs, like the State’s “Safe Routes to School Act.”

According to Caltrans, “Safe Routes to School is an approach that promotes walking and bicycling to school through infrastructure improvements, enforcement, tools, safety education, and incentives to encourage walking and bicycling to school.”

The City has tapped that program a couple of other times with regards to Del Mar Elementary School. With Morro Bay High just a short block from the intersection, it may serve as a funding source, though pedestrian safety for the high school students was the biggest concern by residents who commented before the meetings.

Morro Bay residents, Brian and Nicole Dorfman, were in favor of neither the roundabout nor stoplights.

“Our primary reason for this request is pedestrian

safety,” the Dorfmans wrote to the Council. “Specifically, safety for the scores of high school students who walk through this intersection on a daily basis while school is in session. Any other considerations for this intersection must take a backseat to pedestrian safety.”

They added, “Fortunately for Morro Bay, the location in question is already equipped with the best way to assure very slow speeds of vehicles — stop signs — where every vehicle must stop. With both roundabouts and traffic lights, vehicles can go at significantly faster speeds, and with the case of traffic lights, may even speed up to dash through a yellow light before it turns red.”

Indeed using Los Osos Valley Road through Los Osos as an example, before the County put in stoplights at South Bay Boulevard, 10th and 9th Streets, there were 4-way stops.

In the latter 1990s when the lights went in at all three intersections, speeds on LOVR through the main area of the Downtown increased by nearly 20 mph, with cars rushing to beat red lights.

Before, everyone knew they had to stop anyway, so speeds were considerably slower.

Morro Bay resident, Gail Johnson, didn’t want any changes either. “Please choose Alternative 2, the No-Build Alternative, and direct City staff to explore pedestrian safety measures as part of the Local Road Safety Plan. A roundabout at the intersection would be an expensive and disastrous solution, and is likely to lead to more problems than it will solve.”

She explained that at a roundabout, drivers look left and turn right, without stopping, but with just “Yield” signs. Her experiences with the Morro Bay Boulevard/Quintana Road roundabout have been eye-opening. Her experience “has taught me that crosswalks as a ‘feature’ in a roundabout are insane solutions to pedestrian safety. The point of a roundabout is to yield to the traffic on your left without stopping, so a driver will always concentrate their attention to the left. But pedestrians trying to cross from the right are often not seen.”

Former Mayor Jamie Irons and wife Monica were in favor of a roundabout, having driven through two while on a recent Sierra Nevada trip. They urged the Council “Support and approve the Roundabout option. Adding to agenda correspondence about the Truckee/Tahoe roundabout example. We just drove through that a week ago with a travel trailer and it worked great. Additionally we utilized another roundabout in South Lake Tahoe on the same trip. It provided us the ability to make a U-turn instead crossing traffic.

“The ‘do nothing’ option is the most expensive. Past cost estimates for this intersection was in the \$2M-3M range. Delaying the inevitable will certainly cost more.

Another resident, Cindy Betonte, was also in favor of a roundabout. “There are very good reasons why roundabouts are being built all over the country, as well as internationally. A roundabout is a much safer option for everyone involved. Cars are forced to travel at a lower speed helping to calm traffic, as opposed to encouraging increased speed to ‘make the light.’ Drivers are less agitated when they can keep moving as opposed to waiting at a stand still for traffic signals. There is more space between cars and pedestrians and pedestrians only have to watch for traffic coming from 1 direction on a round-about.”

The closest nearby example of what stoplights here would look like is in Atascadero, she said. “The multiple signals near the intersection of Hwy 101 and Hwy 41 in Atascadero are a nightmare! I was glad to

hear they will be replacing these signals with roundabouts. Multiple Public Works Advisory Board groups have supported this solution and the staff report is clear; the stop signs or multiple signals will not be adequate in the future.”

Designing a roundabout to fit the Main Street/Atascadero Road intersection will take some doing, as the intersection is crossed by underground utilities — water and sewer — plus storm drains, and potentially others.

There are also one set of Hwy 1 off and on ramps that empty directly into the intersection and another set just yards away.

All of these factors are perhaps why the roundabout’s estimated costs have risen so dramatically in the nearly two decades since the city first looked at addressing that intersection.

Bike Giveaway From page 9

“Incarcerated persons working at the Honor Farm,” Cipolla said, “along with the help and guidance of Bike SLO County, complete all of the repairs to the bicycles. This instills in them a positive work ethic, self-respect, and a sense of giving back to the community.”

If readers want to donate bikes and/or helmets (still in the box, please) to the program they can drop them off at any Sheriff’s Substation in Los Osos, Templeton and Oceano or at the Honor Farm. The Honor Farm is located at 880 Oklahoma Ave., off Kansas Avenue and Hwy 1 (at the stoplight.)

Send monetary donations (checks) to: Sheriff’s Advisory Foundation Attn: Bicycle Fund, P.O. Box 3752, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403. This year’s Christmas Bicycle Giveaway is scheduled for the week of Dec. 11.

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News

Auctioned From page 1

plained that the SLO City Council changed its cannabis ordinance and that Broad Street site, which was completely remodeled and ready to open but never did, that essentially says no one can buy the property if they intend to open a dispensary in it.

“He [Dayspring] built an amazing business,” Young said. But now, “He’s trying to divest from the cannabis industry.”

As for the nhc store itself, Young said it is not part of the sale, but it has a lease and is a sold tenant.

Nhc was bought about a year ago by the publicly traded, Glass House Brands, one of the largest cannabis growers, manufacturers and retail operators in California. So the dispensary and the Morro Bay license are owned by a large firm, which Young said is how the industry is changing. “That’s been the trend,” Young said. “The smaller guys have fallen off.”

He said taxes attached to cannabis sales by both the State and cities, have made it prohibitive for small companies to get into the field. Plus cannabis is still against federal law, which further complicates the industry.

But the key to this is that nhc no matter who owns it has been very successful in Morro Bay and holds one of just two cannabis licenses in the City of Morro Bay (Perfect Union at 1000 Quintana Rd., has the other).

“It’s a unique piece of commercial property,” said Young. It’s not the first time he’s sold commercial real estate in an online auction but the first-time using Loop Net. He said using the larger auction house has allowed information about the sale to reach a much wider audience.

Having a thriving business already in tenancy makes all the difference in the world of commercial real estate investing, Young explained. That’s where a landlord makes his money. “It represents the value of the property,” Young added.

The property is described in the auction listing as “4,340 square feet of modern retail space, originally built on a .1-acre lot in 1977. The property is fully renovated with a wealth of modern features and amenities, including an attractive masonry façade, prominent signage on a tree-lined street, 12-foot high ceilings, and five on-site surface parking spaces. The



The interior of the nhc property. Photo submitted

notable storefront offers direct frontage to Morro Bay Boulevard, the primary commercial corridor of the city.”

The site mentions that the store is 0.3-miles from the Embarcadero and sits in a thriving business district that includes numerous eateries, shops and the Bay Theater. Young noted the relatively large size of the retail space, which for decades housed Mills Stationary and ASAP Reprographics. ASAP moved to a location on Quintana Road after Dayspring bought the property for a dispensary.

He spent about \$1 million completely revamping the interior and exterior before opening in April 2021 during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. And he did a fantastic job on it, as the interior, which is divided into a CBD section and a cannabis section, resembles a high-end jewelry store.

As with most real estate properties location is everything. “A recently updated retail location with a performing tenant whose competition is heavily limited by local legislation makes Morro Bay an excellent location for new investment,” reads the description of the site on the auction website.

So far, he said, the responses from potential buyers have been good. “It’s been really good,” Young said. “There’s been healthy interest. Morro Bay has been the most desirable location so far,” he added with regards to the Lemoore and Turlock properties that are also being sold.

“People are not buying office buildings in San Francisco or Silicon Valley anymore,” he said. Many investors shying away from big cities like San Francisco, which have been losing residents and business fleeing rising crime and the degradation of their quality of life. Plus, he added, the pandemic changed a lot about how people view work, including the rise of working remotely. So, a person can work for a big city firm but live in a small town like Morro Bay.

The sale requires a prospective buyer to register and show they have the means to actually pay the bid they make. The reserve price is not being disclosed but the starting bid listed on the website is \$550,000.

For comparison, a former bank site on Ocean Avenue in Downtown Cayucos sold on the first day it went on the market for well over \$1 million.

“It’s [the auction] very straight forward,” Young said. “Put your best offer in and if it meets the reserve it can be yours.”

The auction opens July 24 and closes July 26. The SLO location on Broad Street goes on sale Aug. 7, which Young explained is within the deadline to apply for a new cannabis retail license in the City of SLO. That deadline, Young said, is Aug. 15 and while the location has a sordid history with the City after all of Dayspring’s legal troubles, it may be possible to

convince the City to allow a dispensary to open there, so long as Dayspring isn’t involved. After all, it’s been completely remodeled and was ready to open before the City Council revoked his cannabis license.

As for the future, Young said he sees the day coming soon for cannabis tourism. The dispensary in Lemoore has a “consumption lounge,” Young explained. The consumption lounge is a separate location from the retail sales areas where customers can go to partake of the evil weed.

Some places, like in Colorado, have a burgeoning cannabis tourism industry, with cannabis-friendly motels, and lounges to toke up or gobble down edibles for those so inclined. “Tourism,” Young said, “is the next big thing.”

Windwalker From page 11

cating it had been seized by the U.S. Marshal’s Service.

According to D. N. Jones Documentation Service, Inc.’s website: “A documented vessel is one that is registered by the Federal Government through the U. S. Coast Guard, rather than titled and numbered by a state. Pleasure vessels of 5 net tons and over [26-feet in length and up] may be documented, and commercial vessels 5 net tons and over must be documented.”

That would make most commercial fishing boats Federally Documented vessels, adding a layer of protections — and red tape — to ownership of a vessel.

That’s because the Coast Guard, which documents all such boats, is supposedly keeping superior records of documented boats versus boats licensed through a State agency like DMV in California.

The benefits of documenting a vessel, according to D.N. Jones include:

- Title Assurance: You have better assurance of title because the U.S. Coast Guard has more stringent chain of title requirements than do most states. Once a vessel is documented, the complete history of the vessel is available on the Abstract of Title.

- Foreign travel: If you sail in foreign waters, your Certificate of Documentation facilitates clearance with foreign governments and gives you the status and protection of a U.S. flag vessel.

- Financing: Most lenders require documentation so that their interest may be secured by a Preferred Ship’s Mortgage recorded by the U.S. Coast Guard.

- Prestige: Many boat owners like the prestige of having their boats documented. Others object to state registration because they do not want to display the numbers on the hull. A major advantage becomes evident when you sell your boat, as ownership and encumbrances are easy to check.

On the other hand, seizing a federally documented vessel for non-payment of local slip fees, as with Windwalker, and selling it to pay the bills, becomes trickier, as the process is laid out in federal law.

Normally, with a boat that isn’t registered by the Federal Government but through an agency like California DMV, all the court proceedings are local. With Federal Documented vessels, it’s done in Federal District Court. The closest Federal Courts to Morro Bay are in Fresno and Los Angeles.

That means going to federal court to provide supporting evidence of non-payment, in order to get an order allowing it to be seized and sold.



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The Windwalker was posted for auction on Craig's List (Post I.D.: 7634705784). According to the auction website, Windwalker is a schooner-hulled steel vessel, built in 1984. It's 64-feet long and 18.5' wide, and has a steel hull. She's rigged to fish using traps or pots or troll lines — long lines of baited hooks that trail in the water behind the boat. From the photos online, she looks to have lived a tough life fishing, and the inside of the cabin, wheelhouse and galley look like someone is living in it, though Schiafone assured EBN that no one lives on it now.

The auction is on an "as-is, where-is," basis so the harbor department is looking to sell it with all the gear and personal effects too. She sports a Cat 334 diesel engine, rated at 250-horse power, a John Deere 30-kilowatt generator and two Isuzu back-ups. She also has a mast and sail rigging. She can pack on 80,000 kilograms in a pair of insulated fish holds; and has a 25-ton Bohn blast freeze. She has a capacity of 4,400 gallons of fuel and carries 600-gallons fresh water.

Windwalker has the normal compliment of electronics — GPS, VHF, SSB, two radars, sounder and autopilot. She has four berths in two staterooms. There is one requirement that seems to have been put down by the City: "The successful bidder will be required to safely remove the vessel from the City of Morro Bay's Harbor and jurisdiction within 14 days after the completion of the sale."

Local commercial fisherman, Jeremiah O'Brien told Estero Bay News that the Windwalker was built by a man named Morgan Davies somewhere up Hwy 41 and its design is good for what it was built to do — fish. "It was built in Morro Bay," O'Brien said, "It would be an excellent tuna boat or a long liner."

There are a lot of schooner-hulled boats and a lot have masts, like Windwalker, he added. The boat's last owner, John Gillespie, O'Brien explained, fished with the boat for many years but fell ill and got behind on his slip fees. He cautioned that the boat hasn't been hauled out in a long time and its worth depends on the condition of its bottom. "The bottom is the key," O'Brien said. "That would add a lot to repair it."

He said that he was able to tour the boat after it was seized and while a lot of the electronics are old, there are some parts on it that could be valuable, including a crab block built in Astoria Wash., by famed machinist Warren Junes, of W.L. Junes, L.T.D. "He makes the very best equipment," O'Brien said. A crab block is the piece of equipment used to haul crab pots off the seafloor. That part might be worth about \$10,000.

He said Windwalker has always tied up at the T-piers over the years and hopes someone buys it, though it will cost a great deal of money to bring it back. "I hope that somebody does buy it," he said. "I hate to see a built in Morro Bay boat go away."

He added that the requirement that it be removed from the harbor could be a way to make sure someone doesn't buy it and then move onto it essentially turning it into a relatively inexpensive, floating home. But leaving it in danger of some day springing a leak and sinking, which could cost upwards of \$30,000 to demolish and remove it, an expense that could eventually fall on the City.

As to how much it might cost to bring it back, O'Brien didn't want to give an estimate without a more thorough survey of its condition. But suffice it to say, it would take a lot of money.

This isn't the first time a federally documented vessel has been seized by the City for non-payment of dockage. Years ago the City went through the same process with regards to the F/V St. Joseph, which had essentially been abandoned at the South T-pier by the owner after a series of unfortunate and tragic mishaps, including the death of a crewman.

Moving Forward From page 1

states the group is committed to the enduring preservation of the rural greenbelt that surrounds Cayucos, California.

Between the two of them, Greg and Mary have served more than 50 years on CLC's board of directors. Launched in 1999 Greg is a founding member, served as president of the board from 2004 through 2012 and is currently Lands Committee Chair. Mary has been membership chair since 2004. Recently I met with them to learn more about one of their projects since I would not be able to attend CLC's Hillside Parcel Tutorial, August 9 from 7-8:30 pm.

"We work with willing owners who want to sell their property at a fair market value," said Greg. CLC will also act as negotiator to secure the appropriate overseer to monitor the wildlands or if visitor-serving, manage public access and protect the habitat. Successful acquisitions over the years have been Estero Bluffs State Park, San Geronimo Ranch, and Harmony Headlands. The boards current projects are the Hillside Lots above Cayucos and Toro Coast Preserve.

"This (Hillside Lots) is an ongoing quest not an active campaign," Greg wanted all to understand. The goal is to ultimately acquire all or most of the 1,600 lots. Currently CLC has approximately 25% or about 400. "Over the years many county leaders have agreed the area probably shouldn't be built out. These lots were never surveyed, have no water and are on unstable land."

Mary said, "The lots are often referred to as paper lots." In real estate terminology these are land parcels that can be bought and sold like other land properties, but the lots only exist on paper, and they are not buildable. She explained stories that have passed through generations of Cayucos residents say, "back in the 1920s sometime, someone took out a piece of paper and drew lots on the hillsides above Cayucos. Realtors would sell a lot in the Cayucos' numbered streets and give away a 'paper lot' with the sale."

When CLC decided to acquire the hillside lots as a project, the group determined a fair market value of \$2,500 for each parcel. They let it be known CLC was interested in preserving the hillsides where the lots had been 'sold' or bonused. Offers to buy were available for those with appropriate paper lot title.

Greg explained the challenges CLC has met. Typically, families will discover the paperwork during the time the family will is read. Others discovered it buried in files long forgotten about. The lots were never surveyed so it is very difficult to determine where lots cross over onto another lot. Most of them are 50X100X40 and would be too small to develop anything significant or livable. County building codes require 1.5 acres to build, so one needs several lots. They are also outside the area for urban services. The County calls them rural lands. In fact, the area's road



A map of the Hillside Lots, so-called paper lots, above Cayucos and Toro Coast Preserve.

is a Cal Fire access road. And they still must find their own water.

"Some will decide to sell, but others decide to keep it because \$2,500 isn't much to them and they can say they own a piece of Cayucos," Greg added. "Others decide they can save it for their grandchildren, who might be able to build on it someday."

Regarding monitoring the area, including the 400 lots CLC already owns, Greg said, "As much as we'd like to put more benches and hiking trails in the area, we don't want to infringe on another's property. There is so much unknown. We take it step by step." The group has a hike at least annually to check the status of the area. When they get reports of illegal use activities, they report it to the Advisory Council. "We've lobbied our County Supervisors to put a gate up — not to keep out the hikers, but to curb the dumping, motorcycle usage and illegal camping. We intend to good neighbors."

So, check your files. Maybe you'll discover a paper that looks like a deed of property ownership in Cayucos you didn't know about. Curious to learn more or collect \$2,500? CLC Board member, Louisa Smith, will help guide willing sellers through the arduous research process. You can meet her and other members of CLC August 9 at their annual Hillside Lots Tutorial. Register at hello@cayucoslandconservancy.org.

Home For Sale on 1 Acre in Los Osos



This is a must see! 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom house with 2 car garage. Bonus room attached to the garage. Well house shed, workshop and an additional bonus room are detached from the garage. On 1 acre with plenty of potential. An elevated frontage on Nipomo Avenue. Plenty of room for farm animals. Priced at \$899,000

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# Serving The Central Coast



**Stanley Craig**  
Broker Associate  
805-235-0514  
DRE# 01431785

A rare diamond stone only shows it's beauty as the facets are cut exposing the brilliance! This 11.5 acre ranch property located on Little Morro Creek Rd is our rare diamond. A 1676 s ft single level 2 bedroom 2 bath ranch home offers a unique opportunity to cut your personal diamond facets. With beautiful Morro Rock and Ocean views this usable land can be what your dreams are made of. A working avocado ranch? Horse Property with space to add riding arenas? Or is it your next dream home with room to update and expand. The 1977 home features tile kitchen counter tops, a large pantry and an indoor grill. The light and airy breakfast nook is off the kitchen service window allowing you to enjoy the backyard patio area. The bathrooms both feature tile vanity counter tops and tile tub and shower enclosures. Large paver stone floor tiles are throughout the entire home. Outdoor features include a small garden, concrete rear patio with a fountain, an enclosed animal pin, potential RV parking with available



power/water and septic hookups. Lastly use the converted detached two car garage as an ADU or living quarters as you create your dream exposing all the brilliance this property has to offer.

**\$1,600,000.00**

**Call Stanley Craig for a private showing  
of this fabulous opportunity!**  
805-235-0514

**New Listing: 462 Arcadia Ave. \$1,629,000.**



**Tim Cowan**  
Agent  
805.459.3818  
CA DRE # 02021716

4 bed 2.5 bath 2005 Beautiful custom home in the Heights of Morro Bay. Incredible panoramic views of the ocean, bay and hills plus minutes away from downtown, waterfront, hiking, biking, surfing and golfing you will quickly understand why this is one of the most desirable locations in Morro Bay.

**Call Tim Cowan or Tera Dube for a showing**

CA DRE # 02021716

CA DRE # 02132432

This Cayucos oceanfront custom home was completely remodeled in 2017. There are 3 bdrms, 3 bths, including two primary suites; one downstairs and one upstairs. A guest bedroom, guest bathroom, living room and kitchen are also downstairs for those wanting single level living. The upstairs primary suite has access to the roof-top deck which has electricity, gas and water. The BEAUTIFUL custom made glass dry bar between the kitchen and living room is a perfect place to sit and watch the waves. Take the private steps



down to enjoy the beach or simply relax on the deck to enjoy this paradise.

**Priced at \$4,750,000**



**Kathy Taverner, CRS, GRI**  
Broker Associate  
805-235-0437  
CA DRE # 00870894



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